This edition of Conflict Trends reflects on developments and democracy in Africa in the first year of the African Renaissance

EDITORIAL

BY HUSSEIN SOLOMON

The year 2000 is behind us, and at this stage, it would be good to reflect on some of the lessons this first year of the twenty-first century has taught us in our endeavours to resolve Africa's many conflicts. The resurgence of violent conflict between RENAMO and FRELIMO in Mozambique, underlines the fact that peace is not merely the cession of armed hostilities, and that unless root causes are addressed, a return to violence becomes highly probable. The return to violence in Mozambique – six years after the first democratic elections which ended years of civil war – also emphasises the truism that sustainable peace is a long-term goal and that short-term strategies only postpone the crisis.

Nigeria also holds important lessons for the conflict resolution practitioner. It cautions against simplistic monocausal explanations of conflict. The demise of General Sani Abacha's military dictatorship, as well as the emergence of a new democratic dispensation under President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999, did not act as a salve for deeply ingrained ethnic tensions and religious animosities. Put simply, communal violence flared up, despite proper civil-military relations. There are also other lessons that can be gleaned from the Nigerian experience. Firstly, the transition process from dictatorship to democracy is fraught with many dangers. These dangers persist long after the formal ending of an autocratic regime's power. Secondly, as a result of the aforementioned, the international community needs to stay involved. Thirdly, peace has to be approached in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

The ongoing carnage in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, however, holds an important qualification for the need of international involvement. The international community needs to coordinate their efforts better, as belligerents must receive clear and unambiguous signals from the international community.

The re-establishment of a government in strife-torn Somalia, after years of having the dubious distinction of being the epitome of a failed state, holds two important lessons for policy-makers and scholars. Firstly, peace, as Operation Restore Hope illustrated, cannot be enforced from the outside. The will and commitment for peace must come from the belligerents themselves. Secondly, Somalia also underlines the point that sustainable peace can only be achieved from below. Without the participation of the ordinary man and woman in the peace process, peace becomes unsustainable.

Meanwhile, the formal signing of the ceasefire agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which was jointly facilitated by the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations, emphasises the need for effective partnerships in order to arrive at enhanced capabilities for conflict prevention, resolution or containment. ⚑

Conflict Trends spoke to Mr Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD about the prospects for peace on the continent

BY SEAN CALLAGHAN

INTERVIEW

Conflict Trends: What are the prospects for peace on the continent?

Vasu Gounden: Our continent continues to be plagued by protracted conflicts in Angola and Sudan. In addition, we are witnessing a multi-country conflict in the Great Lakes region on an unprecedented level. These conflicts and others that continue to plague must be seen against the backdrop of peace agreements that have been reached in Mozambique and South Africa and more recently in Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. These peace agreements are complimented by free and fair multi-party elections that have been held in several African countries. These trends signal a new determination among Africans and a maturing of the political climate and must give us hope for continued peace on our continent.

Conflict Trends: What role do foreign interests play in the ongoing conflicts in Africa?

Vasu Gounden: We are often told that as Africans we should not continue to blame all our problems on colonialism, and to an extent I agree. However, there are many foreign individuals and companies who are shamelessly involved in illicit mining and trading activities that are fuelling the wars, particularly in resource rich countries. Their governments must share the responsibility for their actions since it is in their power to pass legislation to outlaw such activity and give peace a chance in Africa.

Conflict Trends: Don't Africans need to take responsibility for some of the conflicts?

Vasu Gounden: We have to acknowledge that weaknesses in governance, lack of transparency in public administration, politicization of ethnicity and arms trafficking are all activities that we as Africans are architects or administrators of. All these activities contribute to conflicts which continue to leave millions of our people in abject poverty, unemployed and homeless and we must share responsibility for this through our active or passive collusion.

Conflict Trends: What needs to be done if we are to find lasting solutions?

Vasu Gounden: Teams of people have to be dedicated to a particular conflict situation. They have to be trained to analyse the conflict, develop strategies, and implement them with maximum continuity. Part-time mediation only serves to prolong the conflict and waste resources. Full-time, dedicated, and mandated teams stand a better chance of success. However, this type of response requires much more than money. It requires every nation and organisation to subject its representatives to the coordination of this dedicated team. This is a weakness in the current mediation efforts.

Conflict Trends: What role must civil society play in this process?

Vasu Gounden: This approach to conflict resolution cannot and should not be left to governments alone. While governments must lead these efforts, it calls for all of us to make a contribution. Some will have to assist directly but others, in fact all Africans must assist indirectly by not colluding with corruption, xenophobia, intolerance of difference, arms trafficking and other conflict contributors. Civil society has in the past, and should continue to serve as vehicles for promoting good governance, tolerance and peace. ⚑

A look at the extent to which events have contributed or hampered the realisation of making this an African century

UPDATE

BY SENZO NGUBANE

Africa in the year

2000

Much of the human tragedy that the world witnessed in the latter part of the twentieth century occurred in Africa, where most of the wars and huge human suffering far outweighed any positive development. Indeed, Africa became a hub of conflict that raged on for years and many of the conflicts seemed to be without an end. The culmination of the Cold War also witnessed less involvement of the international community in African affairs, which prompted most commentators to state that Africa had lost its strategic relevance *vis-à-vis* other continents.

It was precisely for this reason that African leaders were quick to declare, in the dying years of the twentieth century, that the twenty-first century should be an African century. This assertion was borne out of a realisation that most of Africa's problems were 'man-made' and that they were therefore resolvable. The twenty-first century was to signal the emergence of a continent ready to tackle its problems in order to ensure that it rose once again from the ashes. The intention of this article is to provide a synopsis of the main events that occurred in Africa during the first year of the twenty-first century. It also intends to make an assessment of the extent to which some of these events have contributed or hampered the realisation of making this an African century.

The year 2000 began with a meeting of the United Nations Security Council. The session focused on Africa and dealt with most of the pressing issues facing Africa. For instance, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). However, the meeting was important for another reason: for the first time in its history, the Security Council discussed a non-military issue – HIV/AIDS – as a threat to Africa's security. As stated during the meeting, what lies at the centre of

SOMMET DES CHEFS D'ETATS ET DE
GOUVERNEMENTS DE L'OUA
LES 10-11-12 JUILLET 2000

a security agenda is the protection of human lives. Consequently, HIV/AIDS should be taken as a threat to Africa's security because present studies reflect that the number of people who will die of AIDS in the first decade of the twenty-first century, will almost equal the number of people that died during all the wars of the twentieth century. According to the *World Health Report 2000*, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has cut the life expectancy rate by 40 years in most southern African countries. Hence, there is little doubt that such a situation poses a threaten to the stability of most countries.

The UN Millennium Assembly was held towards the latter part of this year. Its aim was to draft new strategies for the organisation, in order for it to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. During the gathering, African leaders made a plea to the international community to focus its attention on the whole of Africa, instead of just a few countries or conflict situations. What, one may ask, has happened since these two events took place?

In the north, Egypt and Algeria are among those countries still battling with Moslem rebels who continue to carry out terror campaigns. Despite a government sponsored ceasefire in Algeria, most of these rebel groups continue with their activities. For instance, during a series of attacks carried out in July, more than 300 civilians were killed. In the case of Egypt, the government embarked on a campaign to curb the activities of rebels by arresting 200 alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The future of Western Sahara also hangs in the balance – thus far, the UN has been unsuccessful in trying to organise a referendum.[1]

Most of the drama in West Africa came from Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. In Nigeria, the newly fledged democracy seemed to be under threat as violent inter-ethnic and inter-religious clashes surfaced in most states. In the case of Sierra Leone, we were reminded that a ceasefire agreement should never be considered an end to a crisis, but an important step towards ensuring the resolution of any conflicts. This fact was clearly illustrated this year, when we saw the renewal of the conflict in the country, despite the fact that a ceasefire agreement had been signed in Lomé in 1998. The militias, who included the West Side Boys – who not only found it difficult to disarm, but also took the war to the peacekeepers – consistently undermined the UN peacekeeping mission. The world was once again reminded of what happens when the UN deploys a mission that is inadequate for the task at hand.

East Africa, as well as the Horn of Africa, were not left out of the unfolding crisis situation in Africa. In the Comoros archipelago, the politics of secession reared its ugly head when Anjouan Island declared its 'independence' from the central government. This action prompted the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to impose sanctions on the separatist leaders of the Island. The main concern for this area was the issue of food security, mostly due to drought. Numerous different countries appealed for emergency humanitarian assistance. In Kenya, the World Food Programme (WFP) appealed for US$88 million in food aid to assist more than 3,3 million people who were facing hunger. In Ethiopia, the figure almost tripled: the UN country office appealed for US$193,4 million to assist ten million people who were facing similar problems.

The continued war in Angola, as well as the unstable and volatile situation in the DRC, continued to pose major threats to the stability of the Great Lakes and southern Africa respectively. As fighting intensified between UNITA and Angolan Armed Forces (FAA), thousands of people crossed into neighbouring Zambia as refugees. This resulted in increased tension between the two countries. The Angolan war has also been taken into Namibia, where a deteriorating security situation on the northeastern border saw a number of

ALEXANDER JOE/AFP

ABDELHAK SENNA/AFP

civilians fall prey to military attacks.

In the DRC, things deteriorated further when, at the beginning of the year, Rwanda and Uganda (two former allies) fought for control of Kisangani. In addition, clashes between the Mai-Mai militias and the RCD-Goma rebels continued in South Kivu. The Lusaka agreement also appeared to be under pressure as President Kabila refused to accept former president of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, as facilitator in the country's conflict. The situation was further compounded by President Kabila's refusal to allow UN peacekeepers to deploy into areas that were under his government's occupation. In August, a regional meeting was held, but it ended with no clear resolution to the impending stalemate. The human cost of the war is more than worrying, when one considers that in July alone, more than 40,000 people took refuge in the Republic of Congo.

However, all has not been negative in Africa. In fact, what is seen as negative, has existed hand in hand with countless positive outcomes. We could use Angola to illustrate this point – there we have witnessed the emergence of initiatives, across civil society and various church groups, aimed at bringing about peace in the country. For example, the willingness of the Protestant Council of Christian Churches, the Angolan Episcopal Church and the Angolan Evangelical Alliances to mediate between the warring parties. For the conflict to be resolved, such efforts need to be expanded in order to have a multi-track approach to the crisis in the country.

Another positive development was the signing of the Burundi Peace Agreement by the various political formations in the country. This gesture, which took place under the Arusha Peace Process, signaled a giant leap towards stabilising the political environment within the country. At around the same time, conditions for the re-establishment of the state of Somalia were agreed upon in Djibouti. Leaders from different Somali clans met for three months in Djibouti, where they ultimately agreed to the formation of a new government for the country. The success of this uniquely African experience will depend on the support that other African states, and the rest of the international community, give to the newly formed government of Somalia. This year, the two-year-old war between Eritrea and Ethiopia came to an end when both countries signed a ceasefire agreement under the joint aegis of the OAU and UN. Following the signing of the agreement – that brought to an end a war which cost thousands of human lives – a UN mission was deployed to the country to ensure the two parties uphold the ceasefire.

On a broader African level, the continent moved closer to enhancing its economic cooperation when the OAU summit (held in Togo) adopted a resolution to form the Union of Africa. The proposed Union will consist of nine organs, including an Assembly of the Heads of States, an African Court of Justice and an Economic Commission. Problems not withstanding, the decision of the OAU summit is a reflection of the willingness, on the part of African leaders, to collectively confront African socio-political and economic challenges.

Clearly, the year has had mixed fortunes for Africa, where hope for peace and stability was mingled with scenes of violent conflict, starvation from food insecurity and death. As Africa moves towards claiming the twenty-first century as the African century, a lot of work still needs to be done. However, if peace can blossom in Somalia, there is nothing preventing Africans from producing the same result in the DRC or Angola. ∆

Endnote

1   The UN Mission has been extended several times with the latest extension being 28 February 2001.

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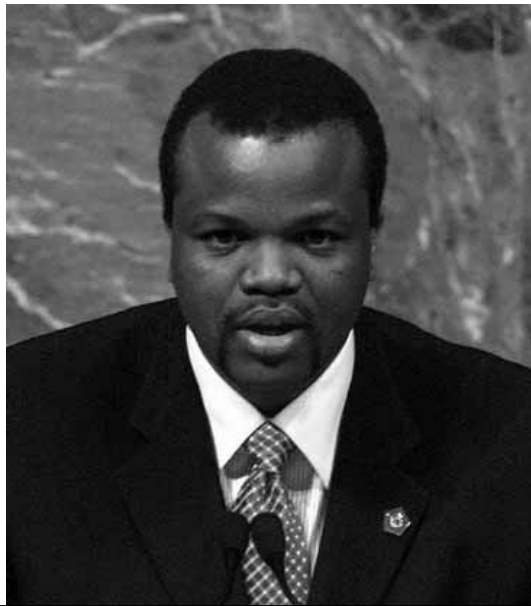
Pressure is mounting on
the monarchy to implement
wide sweeping changes

DEMOCRACY

BY REBECCA STEINMANN

reforming
the kingdom

The Kingdom of Swaziland stands alone as the only single-party monarchy on the continent of Africa. Five years after achieving independence in 1968, King Sobhuza II put in place a system of government that combined traditional and Western styles of governance.

Since that time, pressure to create a more democratic climate in Swaziland has come from both inside and outside the country. Labour bodies have pressured the government to liberalise labour laws, and political parties have pushed for a multiparty system of governance. These calls for reform have prompted King Mswati III – King Sobhuza's successor since 1986 – to appoint a Constitutional Review Commission (CRC). The Commission was appointed in 1996, and was scheduled to complete its review by 1998. This deadline was delayed and the Commission was recently disbanded.

Trade unions and external labour bodies have loudly protested two sections in the Industrial Relations Act (IR Act), issued by the King at the end of August 2000. Sections 40 and 52 of the Act are the controversial components because they hold workers individually responsible for strike damages, and also restrict the formation and free assembly of unions.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) criticised the clauses, and the United States' trade representative has threatened to remove Swaziland from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) if the sections are not changed. Loss of GSP status could be devastating for the economy, as Swaziland depends on this reduced tariff to remain competitive in the US market, particularly in the sugar, lumber and textile industries. Swaziland made a last minute appeal to the US government, which agreed to allow a two-month extension of the deadline – from September to November, 2000. The

extension will give the Swaziland government time to review the contentious sections in the IR Act.

In reaction to the IR Act and the impending loss of status from the GSP, the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) and the Federation of Labour Union (SFL) united to hold a national strike on 28 September 2000. The strike slowed business and sent a message to the government that current trade unions were able to mobilise and generate support over the GSP issue.

Pressure to adopt a system of multi-party politics has come from banned political opposition parties such as the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO), the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC) and the Swaziland Solidarity Network (SSN). While these parties are regarded as illegal, the government has not been pro-active in breaking them up or enforcing the ban, since they have kept a low profile and have not posed a major threat to the monarchy thus far. However, these parties have been critics of the constitutional amendment process. They have dis-

missed and discredited the CRC, believing it to be a partisan commission. They have also suggested that the review process has not been transparent.

Given that the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) has been highly unpopular with the public, perhaps a new commission – one that would be acceptable to the people of Swaziland – needs to be formed. This commission should be viewed as open and transparent in its process of gathering findings and making recommendations.

The fostering of a vibrant civil society in Swaziland would also contribute to the kingdom's quest for political stability. Labour bodies, political parties and other relevant stakeholders (both state and non-state actors) need to take responsibility by engaging in dialogue in order to transcend the current challenges facing Swaziland. ᴧ

Endnote

Rebecca Steinmann is currently serving an internship with ACCORD.

King Mswati III of Swaziland

WALTER DHLADHLA/AFP

The failed election attempt
lead to a second poll in three
months in the Ivory Coast

DEMOCRACY

BY CLASKE DIJKEMA

election chaos

The Ivory Coast was the most stable country in West Africa until 1999. Former president Houphouet, who was in power for 30 years after the country gained independence, allowed into the country those immigrants who would contribute to its prosperity. However, a number of political observers blame his successor, former president Bedie, for causing division within the country and for showing preference for Ivorite descent.

On 22 October, presidential elections took place, which brought to an end almost one year of military rule, following a coup last December that ousted Bedie. Apart from the low turnout of voters (estimated around 35%), the elections themselves passed without special notice. The leader of the

Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), Gbagbo, as well as General Guei, declared themselves to have won the elections before the National Electoral Commission (NEC) made the results public. This resulted in demonstrations and the death of at least 36 people during the few days that followed the elections.

International organisations, such as the OAU, the European Union and the UN, declined to observe the elections because the former government did not implement the OAU's recommendation of an all-inclusive election. A total of 12 people were prevented from participating in the elections for unspecified reasons. Of the five candidates that were contesting, only Gbagbo of the FPI, and the military leader General Guei, generated

JEAN PHILIPPE KSIAZEK/AFP

Supporters of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) protest in the streets of Abidjan

enough support to possibly win the elections. General Guei was rejected as presidential candidate for the former governing party, the Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI). Consequently, he chose to stand as an independent candidate. Ouattara, the leader of the Rally of Republicans (RDR), was prevented from participating in the elections. The RDR responded by calling upon its supporters to boycott the elections. This move was supported by the PDCI, which referred to the elections as 'sham elections'.

After the polling stations closed, supporters of General Guei and Gbagbo accused each other of rigging the polls. Impatience over the announcement of the results contributed to unrest in the capital of Abidjan. Gbagbo called upon his supporters to protest and take action against General Guei's presidency. Thousands of demonstrators stormed the Ivorian National Radio to proclaim Gbagbo as president. Subsequently, General Guei fled the country. The National Electoral Commission of Cote d'Ivoire declared Gbagbo as the winner of the presidential elections, with 59.3% of the votes. General Guei clinched 32.72% of the votes. Meanwhile, fierce fighting between supporters of

the RDR and the FPI broke out in various parts of Abidjan, as well as in other major towns.

In an attempt to bring peace to Cote d'Ivoire, Ouattara and Gbagbo agreed to meet and discuss the situation in the country. Ouattara called for fresh presidential elections that were inclusive to all parties. Mr Gourmo, coordinator of the ten political parties in West Africa, praised Ouattara and Gbagbo for their efforts and requested that they reach consensus with all other political parties in the country. Gourmo said it was necessary for all political parties to recognise Gbagbo as president. However, he stressed the need for a transitional government of national unity to prepare the country for new legislative elections. It is under these conditions that the country went the polls on 10 December 2000. Although voting did not take place in some constituencies in the north, the NEC FPI led by current President Gbagbo won 96 seats while the former ruling PDCI obtained 77 seats.

Endnote

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the security of African states cannot be ignored

FEATURE

BY LINDY HEINECKEN

aids
the new security frontier

Never before – not even when the bubonic plague ravaged Europe in the Middle Ages – has there been a disease as devastating to mankind as the current HIV/AIDS pandemic. Unlike many other diseases, HIV/AIDS does not kill the young and old. Instead, it targets primarily those who are in the prime of their lives, those who are often in occupations vital to the economic development and stability of their nations. As the twentieth century drew to a close, about 33,6 million people were living with HIV/AIDS. The United States Office on National Aids Policy claims that by 2005, more than 100 million people will be infected with HIV worldwide.

Currently, sub-Saharan Africa carries the greatest burden, with more than 23,3 million people already infected. This represents 70% of global infections, and means that more than one-tenth of the adult population aged between 15-49 is infected with HIV. It is frightening to think that with every new day, more than 5,500 men, women and children in Africa will die from AIDS. The worst affected countries are all clustered in the southern cone of Africa. The 1999, estimates indicated that Botswana had a staggering HIV/AIDS infection rate of 35.8%, followed by Zimbabwe at 25.06%, Swaziland at 25.25%, Zambia at 19.95%, Namibia at 19.54% and South Africa at 19.94%. The South African estimate showed an increase of 7.19% from 1998. With a total of 4,2 million infected, South Africa has the largest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world – with

A Kenyan scientist, shows blood sample's taken from volunteers to be tested for HIV during the opening of the Aids Vaccine Evaluation Laboratories at the Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi

more than 1,500 infections daily.

The sector of society most affected is the armed forces: in some cases, infection rates are two to five times higher than national averages. Throughout the world, military personnel are considered a high-risk group for both infection and transmission. The reasons are not just related to the nature of their work – 'war is a bloody business'. They are also related to the age group employed and the circumstances under which they are deployed. Most are young, male and sexually active; are deployed for lengthy periods away from home; are subject to peer pressure; are prone to risk-taking; and are often exposed to sex workers and opportunities for casual sex. Bachelor conditions, alcohol abuse and high wages are seen as contributing factors, propagating the infection among the armed forces, especially in poverty stricken regions.

In some African countries where the virus has been present for more than ten years, armed forces report HIV/AIDS infection figures between 40% and 80%. In 1998, it was reported that the Congolese and Angolan armed forces had infection rates of at least 50%. Worse still were the armies of Uganda at 66%, Malawi at 75% and Zimbabwe at 80%. Already in 1993, Zimbabwe claimed that 70% of its officer corps was HIV positive and in Botswana, one in three members tested HIV positive. Information on other armed forces in the region are scant, but estimates show that HIV infection rates are at least twice the national average. Consequently, both the Zambian and Namibian forces may well have HIV prevalence rates of 40% or higher. In these countries, AIDS is now the leading cause of death in both the military and police forces. In some cases, AIDS accounts for more than half of all in-service and post-service mortality. In some countries, AIDS patients occupy about three-quarters of all military hospital beds, and account for more military hospital admissions than battlefield injuries.

Concerning South Africa – the last country in the region to be infected – media speculation rates HIV/AIDS infection within the military to be from 40%, to as high as 90% in some KwaZulu-Natal military units. These estimates have been disputed by the South African National Defence Force, which claims that a recent health assessment of those units most frequently deployed is in the region of 20% – close on the national average. However, this figure should not be extrapolated to all of South Africa's armed forces, as only selected units were tested. The tests were voluntary and

HIV positive members could have chosen not to be selected.

Armed forces form the first and last line of a country's defence. If they become debilitated by the disease, this raises important questions for national and international security. In some African armed forces, the rate of HIV infection has meant that they have been unable to deploy a full contingent, or even half of their troops, at short notice. In complex ways, the epidemic plays a role in power struggles, especially where states are unable to protect state sovereignty or maintain civil order, particularly where their armed forces have become debilitated by the disease.

This raises unique concerns for peacekeeping operations. In the past decade, these missions have become a routine and critical factor in civil-military relations, and in relations among and between industrialised and developing countries. More than ever before, multinational forces are being called upon to contain domestic and international disputes, to provide humanitarian relief and to assist civilian relief agencies. These tasks are often performed in addition to the already difficult job of defusing active or smouldering conflict. For example, between 1997 and 1999, 16 UN peacekeeping operations were underway in Africa, North and South America, Asia and the Middle East. The operations involved more than 14,000 troops, police and observers from 77 countries.

However, continued involvement in these missions poses unique diplomatic dilemmas for countries sending troops to high HIV/AIDS prevalence countries. Military leaders are concerned about exposing their troops to HIV infection from allies, especially when they are expected to fight alongside such forces, and rely on them for medical support. Due to the nature of these operations, exposure to the disease is enhanced. The risk is compounded when peacekeeping contingents are deployed for lengthy operations in regions with high civilian infection rates, and where there are large numbers of refugees and displaced persons.

Until now, the perils of committing forces to areas of high HIV incidence have not been given serious attention, despite the evidence that troop deployment for peacekeeping and other purposes increases HIV transmission to and from host countries. Some observers believe that since 1980, more UN peacekeepers have died of AIDS, than have been killed in military action. Conversely, soldiers from high incidence countries who are deployed in low incidence countries, increase the

HOWARD BURDITT/REUTERS

Zimbabwean HIV/AIDS victim Betimo Jimo, 29, lies on her bed at the Mashambanzou Care Trust in Harare

infection level where they are deployed.

The question is whether the high levels of HIV/AIDS in developing nations could place the future involvement of humanitarian and peace-keeping operations in jeopardy? In this regard, Richard Holbrook, US ambassador to the UN, stated that in future 'the UN [and] the US will never again vote for a peacekeeping resolution that does not require action by the UN's department of peacekeeping operations to prevent AIDS from spreading to peacekeepers'. As more and more UN peacekeepers are deployed in conflict areas, diplomats and international health officials have warned that soldiers need to be protected. UN recommendations currently state that HIV infected troops are not to be deployed on peacekeeping missions. However, few are tested upon their return. While peacekeeping troops strive to bring peace to war-torn countries, the same troops could contribute to the global spread of AIDS.

The armed forces, which lie at the heart of a nation's defence (or destruction), play a crucial role in the HIV/AIDS catastrophe. Within their own nation, they are a high-risk group for HIV infection and transmission. Where infection rates are high, this in turn renders them less able to fulfil their national obligations to protect and defend state sovereignty. Furthermore, as government funds are redirected towards health, welfare and other state priorities, this too impacts on their ability to combat the disease within their ranks: resources, in terms of testing, manpower provision and force preparation, are reduced. In turn, multinational

peacekeeping forces face the dilemma of having to secure peace, provide the necessary humanitarian aid and diffuse conflict where national armed forces have failed. At the same time, however, they render their troops vulnerable to infection, as well as the possible transmission of the disease to their home countries. This evokes questions as to the future willingness of nations to deploy troops to high-risk areas. It also raises important questions as to how foreign relations could be affected in the future.

The raging HIV/AIDS pandemic poses a host of other developmental, military and diplomatic challenges that will continue to escalate in coming years. This will result in renewed tensions between nations. Few can deny that, due to the intensity of the epidemic and the consequences it poses for nations worldwide, HIV/AIDS has become the 'new security threat of the new millennium'. A killer which is silently moving across borders, wrecking havoc with individual lives; national economies; the effectiveness of national armed forces; the willingness of nations to deploy peacekeeping forces to high risk areas; and finally, the havoc it is wreaking on national and international security. In years to come, every nation will come to feel the impact HIV/AIDS, as the pandemic becomes more visible and the consequences more real. ◭

Endnote

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Armed conflict often affects women and children more than the men who fight the war

BY SALLY MATTHEWS

FEATURE

women
in conflict

The constant intra- and interstate conflicts which have characterised some African states, have had profound effects on the community as a whole, and insufficient attention has been given to the effect of conflict on women. Women are deeply affected by conflicts which they have had little or no role in creating. Women's interests have been neglected by the peace-making process, which has resulted in male-centred approaches to peace and security in Africa.

The African continent has experienced, and is still experiencing, very high levels of conflict, especially intra-state conflict. Since 1970, more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa. Last year, more than 15 African countries were involved in wars, or were experiencing severe civil strife. Some African wars have been going on for decades, with little sign of abatement. For example, Angola has been experiencing internal strife for more than 30 years, with only a few periods of peace. Sudan has also been involved in civil war for more than

30 years, and Somalia, Chad and Mozambique have all endured more than ten years of civil war during the last few decades. Major conflicts have also taken place in Zaire (now Congo), Nigeria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Western Sahara.

The reasons for these wars are varied and complex, but all of them have had a devastating effect upon the citizens of Africa. African states' economic and social development has been impeded by these conflicts, and the conflicts have resulted in instability not only for the states concerned, but also for the continent as a whole. The injurious effects of conflicts in Africa are often worst for women and children.

Although most of those involved in instigating and perpetuating conflict in Africa are men, it would be a mistake to view women merely as innocent bystanders in Africa's conflicts.

Some women fight alongside men as soldiers during wars. There are reports of African women

A refugee woman waits for the arrival of Mrs Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who visited the refugee camp of Byumba, North Rwanda, where 3,000 refugees have lived since 1994

fighting against colonialism and exploitation from as far back as the seventeenth century. Women played an important role during the struggles for independence from colonial powers. For example, women combatants in the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) were fully trained and occupied positions at all levels. In South Africa, women were trained as Umkhonto Wesizwe[1] (MK) cadres, although most MK cadres were men. A former female MK soldier reported that although women made up less than 10% of the trainees at her military training camp, they were treated as equals: 'We dug trenches, did guard duty, shared cooking, washing ... We all did the same things'.[2]

Women often support conflict indirectly by providing food and shelter for combatants. They also frequently work as nurses and political educators. The Organisation of Angolan Women (OMA), which is the women's wing of the Popular Movement for the Independence of Angola (MPLA), fulfilled these kinds of roles: women supported guerrilla forces by providing them with food and health care, and by carrying arms over long distances. They were also involved in political education and mobilised support for the MPLA.

According to some authors, women's involvement in conflicts means that women perpetrate violence against other women. In some ways, accounts of women's cruelty to other women during times of conflict is more shocking than the violence that men inflict on women. This sentiment was reflected by Nomvula Mokonyane: '[w]hen it comes to some women's actions against other women, it makes you wonder ... this woman knows exactly what the effects of that pain will be on that other woman'.[3]

During the First World War, only 5% of casualties were civilians. In modern wars, the number of civilian casualties is usually about 80%, with most of them being women and children. In Africa, many civilians (especially women and children) have been killed or injured, despite not being combatants. Civilians are often intended victims, rather than being mere accidental casualties. A South African National Defence Force member reported that their strategy in fighting SWAPO during the 1980s involved the indiscriminate murder of many civilians. He said: '... we kill everything in front of us ... sometimes we take the locals for questioning. It's rough. We just beat them, cut them, burn them. As soon as we've finished with them we kill them.'[4]

The war in Rwanda saw thousands of civilians killed because of their ethnic group, rather than because of any active involvement in the conflict. Many of these victims were women. During some stages of the conflict in Algeria, a thousand civilians were killed every month. There have also been allegations of brutal civilian massacres during the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as in other African states.

The use of landmines in Africa's civil conflicts is a very contentious issue. Women and children have been the major victims of landmines. As many as 30 million landmines have been deployed in at least 18 African states. An estimated 12,000 people are killed annually by landmines and thousands more lose limbs.

The terror and upheaval of war also have profound psychological consequences. A health worker, who worked in Namibia during the 1980s, reported that: Hypertension is frequent … We think it is stress from the war … The mothers are sad and worried … [they] say the children are anxious and tense when the casspirs come round the school.[5]

Women experience trauma due to the loss of family members and the disruption of normal lives. The psychological consequences of war often differ for men and women, and the mental health complications experienced by women are frequently given inadequate attention.

The use of rape as a strategy during conflict has often been ignored. Rape, as well as other forms of sexual violence (such as enforced prostitution), are common during times of conflict. This type of violence impacts women in a way that cannot be fully understood by men, and has implications that last long after the conflict has ended. Rape and sexual violence are used in war for a number of reasons: rape is an outlet for the sexual aggression of combatants and it is related to the idea that women are war booty; it is used to spread terror and loss of morale; and it is used to undermine women's ability to sustain their communities during times of conflict. The UN reported that African women refugees often repeatedly experienced rape or sexual violence and coercion during their experience of conflict. Rapes often occur at the homes of women, during border crossings and at refugee camps.

The consequences of rape during conflict are far-reaching. Mozambican rape victims have argued that the rape of one women is felt by the entire community. Such rapes often occur in front of relatives. Consequently, both the rape victim and her relatives feel shamed and humiliated. Sometimes raped women are rejected by their husbands, especially if they bear the children of their

rapists. A few months after the Rwandan conflict culminated, many women went to the Kigali Maternity Hospital and requested abortions because they were pregnant after having been raped during the war. Others, who gave birth to babies who had been conceived as a result of rape, refused to even look at their infants. The psychological consequences of rape endure long after the rape has occurred. Rape victims often report post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, fear, shame and humiliation.

Rape as a weapon of war has a long history, but it has only recently been gaining attention as a war crime and a crime against humanity. After the Second World War, rape was recognised as a crime against humanity. However, despite this recognition, many of the rapes that have become part of Africa's conflicts, have been given little attention. It has been argued that this is partly due to global racism. When it was discovered that more than 20,000 women were raped during the Yugoslavian conflict, rape as a war crime suddenly came under the spotlight. Previous incidences of rape and sexual abuse of women during African conflicts did not receive nearly as much media attention. A female Croatian delegate acknowledged that the hysteria surrounding Bosnian rape victims: 'probably wouldn't happen to women in Africa … [but happened here] because we are white and so we are interesting [to the media.]'[6]

Now that the rape of women as a war crime has been given more media attention, it is hoped the fate of rape victims throughout African will improve. The fact that charges of rape and sexual violence were included in the trial of war criminals in Rwanda, is a positive indication that gender-based crimes committed during African conflicts are receiving more attention.

Top left: A Rwandan refugee awaits transportation to the border by the UNHCR.

Bottom left: Women soldiers participate in peacekeeping operations in Senegal.

Above: Sierra Leone civilians flee to Freetown to escape RUF rebels.

Africa's wars have resulted in the displacement of more than eight million people, and an estimated 60% to 80% of those people are women. Some of these refugees have left their country, while others have left their homes, but have remained in their country. Women refugees are vulnerable to every kind of attack, especially rape. They frequently come across bandits, soldiers, locals and other refugees, all of whom may assault them.

Once women refugees reach refugee camps, they are still not safe. They often experience sexual abuse at the hands of male refugees and officials. Refugee camps seldom cater for women's needs. Gynaecological care is not viewed as a fundamental need and is therefore not provided for. They are also not given counselling, despite the brutality they may have witnessed or endured themselves.

Wars distort family structures and values. War disrupts children's education and results in an absence of basic health care services. War also results in an increase in female heads of households. Owing to the fact that women in Africa usually have limited social, economic and educational resources, female headship can mean increased poverty and diminished educational opportunities for the entire family.

Women are involved in conflicts and also have to endure the negative consequences of such conflicts. While women's roles as perpetrators of conflict cannot be ignored, it could be argued that women are more involved in working towards peace, than in perpetuating conflict. Some thinkers view women as being more peace-loving than men. This notion of natural female pacifism argues that because women give birth to life, they feel a special responsibility to preserve it. This means that there is an incompatibility between mothering and militarism. Others argue that this is merely a stereotype, and that women are not peace-loving by nature: examples can be provided of extreme cruelty perpetrated by women during conflicts.

It is debatable as to whether or not women are more peace-loving by nature. However, there are certainly many examples of women's groups coming together in support of peace. One example is Roots for Peace, an association formed by Angolan women in 1994. Roots for Peace supported bringing an end to the conflict, and also promoted peace and security. Another example is the Liberian Women's Initiative, which was established in 1994. The organisation claimed the disarmament process in their country needed to be speeded up, and also criticised the UN for ignoring their recommenda-tion to provide incentives for fighters to disarm. The African Women in Crisis (AFWIC) has started a peace project which gives visibility to the various African women's peace movements. Last year, participants of the West African Workshop on Women established an African Women's Anti-War Coalition (AWAC). The AWAC aims to ensure that women are heard during times of conflict, and that they are also involved in preventing conflicts from developing. Another African women's peace conference was held in Zanzibar last year. More than 300 participants attended the conference, which was entitled the 'First Pan-African Women's Conference for Peace and Non-Violence'. There are many other examples of women organising themselves to promote peace in war-torn regions.

The way war is viewed by women, and the consequences it has on women's lives, needs more attention. Women's interests need to be taken into account when resolving conflicts. Women have recognised that conflict in Africa tears apart families and destroys lives. With this realisation, more and more women are fighting for peace.

Male-centred definitions of peace are not considered adequate by women. As Thandi Modise, deputy leader of the African National Congress Women's League, said: '[i]n Africa there is no universal definition of peace. It is not the clichéd definition of not being at war'. We must recognise that as long as our societies are characterised by high levels of violence towards women and children, we are not at peace. As long as women's calls for disarmament and the peaceful resolution of disagreements are ignored, we are not at peace. It is only when we can establish approaches to peace and security that include women's ideas and interests, that we can truly say we are working towards peace.

Endnotes

1   Mkhonto Wesizwe was the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC).

2   Modise quoted in J. Cock, Colonels & Cadres: War & Gender in South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1991, p.151.

3   Quoted in A. Moodley, Stories of African Women in War, Agenda, 43, 2000, p.43.

4   Quoted in T. Cleaver & M. Wallace, Namibian Women in War, London: Zed Books, 1990, p.2.

5   Quoted in T. Cleaver & M. Wallace, Namibian Women in War, London: Zed Books, 1990, p.4.

6   Quoted in V. Farr, How do we know we are at peace? Reflections on the Aftermath Conference, Agenda, 43, 2000, p.27.

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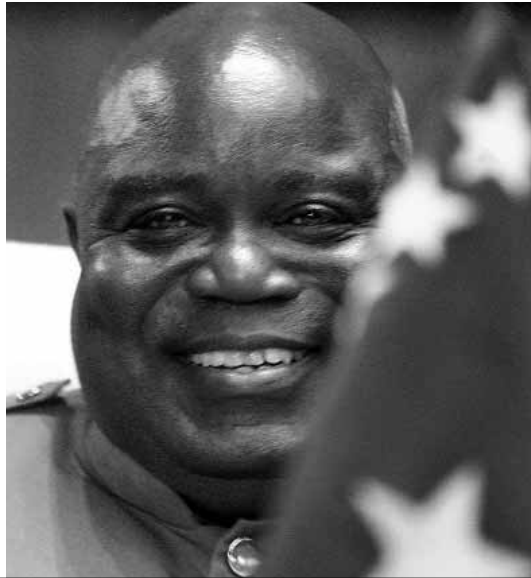
Capitalising on a chance for peace – opening a small window in the Democratic Republic of Congo

UPDATE

BY SHANNON FIELD

a chance for peace?

The realisation of the African renaissance will require a rapid transformation of the status quo, which sees the arc of crisis on the continent stretching from Angola to the Upper Nile Basin. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) lies at the vortex of the continent's conflict zone, with six neighbouring countries and at least three rebel groups having been drawn into what has become Africa's largest battlefield. But for those who refuse to engage in Afro-pessimism, there is the belief that variables always emerge to alter the equation, allowing positive forces to break deadlock and facilitate peaceful change.

Whether this change is borne out of self-interest or human concern is irrelevant, but the fact is that the equation in the DRC has been altered by the death of Laurent Kabila. The country now stands on the cusp of its own history, exactly forty years after the assassination of its first Head of State Patrice Lumumba. The legacy of dictatorship and corruption has left a country the size of Western Europe with virtually no functioning infrastructure – either road, rail or telecommunications, and the average Congolese citizen lives on 30c a day. The DRC is a country at war with itself, and as always, the victim of foreign intervention and the systematic rape of its rich mineral resources. The Congolese are crying out for visionary leadership, and the question on everyone's minds is whether the reconfiguration of power in Kinshasa will signal a new era.

Joseph Kabila has taken up the reigns of power

as one of the youngest and most influential figures from his father's regime. It was his march on Kinshasa in 1997 that resulted in his promotion to Major-General and head of the country's armed forces. Responsible for orchestrating the DRC's military campaigns over the past two years, the world now watches to see whether the soldier turned politician will muster the political will to lead his nation towards peace and become a reconciler and nation builder. In his few public pronouncements in the wake of his father's death, Joseph Kabila has committed himself to the implementation of the Lusaka Peace Agreement, cooperating with the United Nations and MONUC, and forging ahead with the internal dialogue.

These are welcome remarks, but only time will tell whether the new equation will lead to a resolution of the conflict. Logic dictates that the man who served as chief consultant and head of military operations may not deviate too far from established policy. Shortly prior to Kabila's death, military preparations were underway for new ground offensives to compensate for the territorial gains made by the rebels. Joseph Kabila has maintained some continuity in the DRC's military strategy, urging Congolese forces to recapture the areas occupied by enemy forces. The season's rains will stave off any lightening attacks, buying time for outside powers to push an agenda for peace.

The resolve to end the seemingly intractable civil conflict will be tested at a meeting of Foreign Ministers of signatory countries to the Lusaka Accord, which has been scheduled by the UN Security Council to take place on February 21 and 22, 2001. A similar meeting took place exactly a year ago at the United Nations in New York at the Heads of State level, but nothing much changed in terms of the implementation of the Peace Agreement. This time key issues may be addressed which lie at the root of the crisis, such as Rwandan concerns over its national security. Rwanda contends it will never withdraw its forces until the threat posed by the ex-FAR and Interahamwe forces, which have now joined the Congolese armed forces, are neutralised. UN deployment along the Rwanda-DRC border is high on the agenda.

As for the DRC's military allies, despite the fact that both Angola and Zimbabwe have been looking for an exit strategy from the Congo, both have chosen to bolster their military presence in the country. An additional 6,200 military troops have been moved in to occupied territories in the aftermath of Kabila's assassination. Dos Santos may been seeking a way to extricate his forces, but that appears a long-term goal. For the interim, Angola has filled a security vacuum in the DRC, largely controlling security in Kinshasa, and closing the remaining supply routes established by UNITA for diamond trading operations in southwest DRC. In Luanda's corridors of power, those Generals reluctant to be drawn further into the Congo quagmire have been replaced.

Zimbabwe, like Angola, has proved an erstwhile ally, refusing to scale down military operations in the DRC. This despite economic difficulties that may see the economy shrink by 4%, and a suspension of IMF aid. Continuing engagement will prevent the Zimbabwean government from implementing its financial package announced in late 2000, which would cut 15% from the military budget – something that could only be accomplished if its forces withdraw from the DRC. Mugabe sees Zimbabwean involvement as an exercise in conflict management under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This is not likely to change for as long as foreign backed rebels occupy large swathes of the country.

In spite of the apparent stalemate, Joseph Kabila could prove to be his country's saving grace. As a Congolese national and patriot, who has lived in Uganda, has Tutsi roots and was trained by Rwanda in late 1996, he may be more amenable to all sides at the negotiating table. His youth and political inexperience may also allow him to carve out an independent domestic and foreign policy from his predecessor, as long as he keeps the armed forces on his side. If a window of opportunity exists to change course and move towards a dialogue and genuine ceasefire, it needs to be exploited without delay. Part of believing in an African renaissance is capitalising on any chance for peace that presents itself, and pushing open that window.

Endnote

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The past decade has seen
a growing movement for
democracy in north Africa

DEMOCRACY

BY F. GERHARD WOLMARANS

north african
democracy

For a long time the whole of the Maghreb was not associated with democracy, neither in terms of its political institutions, nor in terms of its political culture. This picture has, however, started to change since the early 1990's. At the end of the 1980's, a period of transition to democracy was initiated in the countries of the Maghreb region in North Africa. This occurred in response to pressures for social emancipation and political renewal. This movement gathered momentum following the end of the Cold War, as well as the end of the Second Gulf War of 1990 – 1991. Events in Morocco between 1990 and 2000 serve as an illustration of this region's gradual process of democratisation, both in terms of the successes achieved, but also as far as the difficulties and frustrations it involved.

By the early 1990's, a new urgency for change started to emerge in Moroccan society which led to the initiation of a process of political, institutional and constitutional reform. This process could be seen in the release of political prisoners, in attempts at constitutional reform, and in an increased freedom and independence of political action by the various political actors in Moroccan society. However, it was in the area of human rights, that the most important improvements occurred.

For too long the question of human rights has been the Achilles heel of the Moroccan political system. However, during the last ten years human rights abuses have decreased significantly. In 1990, King Hassan II announced the creation of a *Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme* (CCDH) to investigate the violation of citizen's rights. The CCDH had three committees in charge of dealing with complaints against the police, conditions in prisons, and relations with international human

Polisario fighters near the front line with
Morocco in Polisario-controlled Western Sahara

rights organisations. On 12 December 1990, a National Charter of Human Rights was signed by the main human rights organisations in the country. In April 1991, a new set of laws was adopted by the parliament aimed at improving the detention conditions in the country. A Ministry of Human Rights was formed in November 1993. According to local human rights organisations, there were approximately 500 political prisoners in the country in 1992. By 1996, the same sources reported that the number was down to 68 – 50 of whom were Islamists. In 1994, the king issued a global pardon and allowed the return of exiled opponents. All these steps, coupled with the destruction of several prisons and the release of prominent political prisoners, heralded a whole new era of human rights for Morocco.

There have also been significant attempts at creating the conditions for a dialogue between the contending political viewpoints in Moroccan society. These attempts can be seen through various improvements in the law. On 18 May 1992, a number of the most important opposition political parties got together and formed a coalition of opposition parties known as the *al Koutla al Dimuqratiya* (the Democratic Bloc). One of their first public pronouncements was a call for constitutional reform. Consequently, an electoral amendment was passed by the Chamber of Deputies, which lowered the minimum voting age from 21 to 20, as well as the candidacy age from 25 to 23.

After the first round of the 1993 elections, it seemed as though the opposition stood at the verge of its first electoral success – it captured slightly more seats than the government coalition (the *Wifaq*). However, during the second round of elections the opposition received only 123 seats – it needed 167 to gain an outright majority. They protested bitterly against irregularities in the second round, and on 19 September, one of the main *Koutla* leaders, Abderrahman El Youssoufi, resigned from his ministerial position in protest against the perceived fraud. The main opposition parties then also turned down an invitation from the king to join the government, arguing that they would not consider such a move unless the very powerful and domineering Minister of Interior, Driss Basri, resigned.

This impasse continued for the next three years. Then, on 3 March 1996, the king announced

'Mohammed VI is a modern king. He does not have an authoritarian disposition. We are progressively coming into democracy'

the creation of a bicameral parliament, with a House of Representatives and a House of Counsellors. These amendments to the constitution were approved in a referendum held the following year, amid massive popular participation (85.95% of the 12.3 million registered voters) and the opposition's active support.

Following elections held on 13 June 1997, the *Koutla* emerged as the largest bloc in parliament, with 34% of the vote. Still, this was not the landslide victory expected. However, for the first time the opposition emerged as a serious contender because it won more seats than pro-government parties. The *Koutla* received 102 seats, the *Wifaq* 100 seats and centrist parties 97 seats. This new configuration will certainly add an element of stability to the polity, for it will lead to the game of coalition-building. However, since no single party controls more than 20% of the parliament, the process will in all likelihood favour the monarchy.

The monarchy remains the dominant player within the political landscape of Morocco. During the past 20 years, we have seen a trend develop where political parties were gradually co-opted as the king reshuffled players and increased the number of his partners, who then found themselves locked in a contest of influence rather than one of representation. Consequently, the differences between the *Koutla* and the *Wifaq* are less significant today than the division between rich and poor. Indeed, there are increasing divisions among the different segments of society, and in this context, class struggle has come to the fore as one of the main dynamics in Moroccan political life. Moroccan youth have, for example, sought democracy primarily as a way to achieve a greater level of emancipation. Bred by economic, social and cultural frustrations, the opposition between the *shaabi* (man in the street) and the *makhzen* (royal house) has been fuelling calls for more social justice.

The desire for change in Morocco is energised by the economic recession, and also by the fact that Islamism is gaining ground in the kingdom – Islamist organisations are leading the social protests. These organisations have not yet garnered enough power to revolutionise the country, but their presence is increasingly felt by the authorities. Sheikh Abdessalam Yassin stands out as the leading Islamist figure in Morocco. Yassin has primarily emphasised the issues of socialisation, moral education and spiritual preparation. His movement has taken the form of a network of various religious associations. Like the political

parties, the Islamist groups are never openly critical of the king. Their appeal is often ideological and economic, rather than being concerned with political questions *per se*. They focus on questions of social injustice, excessive Westernisation and moral depravation. However, the centralisation by the monarchy of religious legitimacy – the King is *amir al mumineen* (commander of the faithful) – confines the *ulama* (religious scholars) to a management role within the realm of religion.

Moroccan Islamism's current situation is characterised by semi-clandestinity, prohibitions, arrests and condemnations. However, the authorities do show a certain amount of tolerance. Still, with the Algerian situation right next door, the monarchy has sent a clear and unambiguous message that it will not tolerate a repeat of the tragic Algerian events within its own country. With regard to this issue, it has enjoyed the support of a large part of the population.

Certainly, the Moroccan political system is in the throes of change, and in these times of change, the king plays a central role. The monarchy transcends any and all political actors in the kingdom, and all eyes will thus look to the king to either advance or retard further *demakhzenization* of the Moroccan political system. As we have seen, King Hassan II made some gradual, but definitive steps in opening up Moroccan society. However, it was only when his son took to the throne in 1999 as King Mohammed VI, that Moroccan society became infused with a renewed sense of hope.

Since King Hassan II's death in July 1999, his son has moved decisively to address Morocco's human rights legacy in a manner that is without precedent in the Arab world. The king has created a royal commission to investigate hundreds of cases involving 'disappeared' activists. He has indemnified former political prisoners and their families, and has compensated victims of human rights abuses with a total of US$4 million. Perhaps the king's most important move was the swift and surprising dismissal of Interior Minister Driss Basri, who was sometimes dubbed the deputy king under Hassan II. He was widely considered as the main force behind many of the abuses committed in the kingdom. Mohammed VI stripped Basri of his security responsibility in the Western Sahara, after police used brutal force to break up political protests in the disputed region. The king also closed the case on Morocco's last major political prisoner when he ordered an end to the 10-year house arrest of the Islamist leader, Yassin. He did
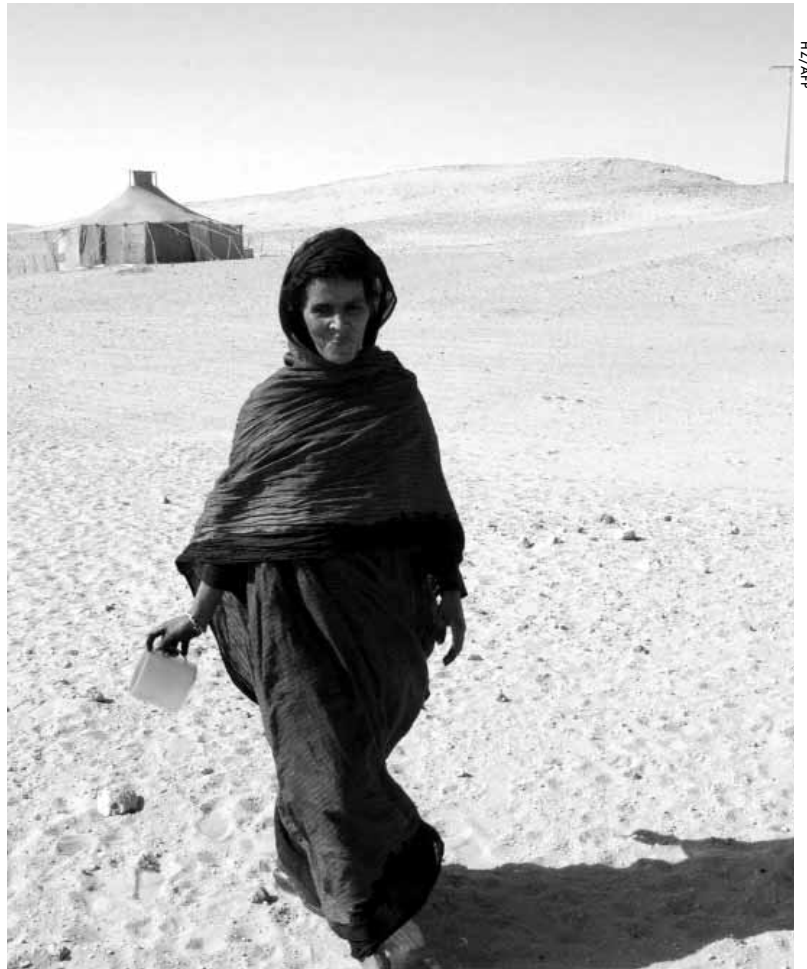
A Western Saharan refugee at the Tindouf refugee camp in the extreme south west of Algeria

this, despite Yassin's continued questioning of the Moroccan monarchy's claim to religious authority.

All these moves indicate that despite the slow pace of change in Morocco, as well as the frustration experienced by those working in the name of democracy, the candle of hope is still burning and is even spreading. This sentiment is expressed in the words of Abraham Serfaty, a prominent human rights activist who has spent many years of his life in prison and in exile, but who has now been allowed to return to Morocco by the new king, 'After 35 years of very strong dictatorship, things are beginning to change.' Of the new king he says, 'Mohammed VI is a modern king. He does not have an authoritarian disposition. We are progressively coming into democracy.' ◮

Endnote

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The struggle for the control of strategic resources is playing an increasingly important role in territorial conflicts

FEATURE

BY SAGAREN NAIDOO

natural resources

in conflict

Contemporary theories of war have been compelled to provide explanations for armed conflicts that have become intractable and protracted. The study of 'war economies' is a recent development which attempts to provide an understanding and explanation of the political economy of protracted armed conflicts that are predominantly intra-state. The main objective of this study is to determine the capacity of the warring actors in developing countries – particularly those in Africa – to raise the required revenue to sustain a conflict following the decline of Cold War military and financial support. Explanations for the sustainability of conflicts have begun to focus increasingly on the exploitation and expropriation of a country's natural resources by the warring parties to finance and maintain their war efforts. The recent awareness campaign on 'conflict diamonds' forms part of this focus.

The rise of war economies

During the Cold War, superpower rivalry created and maintained political alliances of patronage with warring parties in numerous countries around the world. With the demise of the Cold War, these linkages of external patronage and clientalism have dwindled, forcing warring parties to develop and seek alternative means for their economic sustainability. This has meant establishing transnational

economic networks in pursuit of all forms of external support and supplies that were once provided for by either the East or the West. Access to global markets are now based on transcontinental smuggling networks involved in the sale of extremely valuable resources such as precious and strategic minerals, as well as commodities like hardwoods and coffee. These resources and commodities are sold in order to secure a supply of arms, fuel, equipment, spare parts, clothing and food.

Furthermore, the demise of the Cold War has allowed for the easy purchase of small arms and light weapons that are fairly inexpensive, and also require relatively little training to use. The need for the former Soviet Union republics to boost their export earnings has turned Soviet military aid into a private arms industry. In other words, the supply-side of the small arms industry has become even more vibrant with the fall of the Soviet Union, where there is now a massive surplus of arms, just waiting for a willing buyer with the right price. The availability of these cheap weapons has given warlords new opportunities to arm themselves and directly challenge vulnerable governments. At the same time, embattled rulers have also been able to afford these surplus weapons, even with shrinking revenues.

The modality of a 'war economy'

In the absence of Cold War patronage, belligerents have become highly dependent on all other forms of external support and trade networks to survive. Current trends and modalities of war economies reflect transnational economic linkages, which are heavily reliant on smuggling a state's natural resources for the supply of military hardware required to sustain a war. War economies are, in turn, managed by both political elites, as well as longstanding and burgeoning rebel movements. While the ruling elites have utilised national armies to foster business ventures for private financial gain, rebel movements have taken control of strategic sites with guaranteed commercial spin-offs.

A classic example of this phenomenon is the conflict in Angola. During the 1980s, Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebels relied on Cold War support from the United States and South Africa. With the severing of such ties, UNITA took control of diamond fields and achieved its financial independence from the sale of this precious mineral. Savimbi has been reputed to have accumulated

more than US$4 billion in financial assets from the sale of diamonds. On the other hand, the withdrawal of Soviet military aid has forced the Angolan government to rely on the sale of oil to finance its war against UNITA. Other examples of the same phenomenon include the role of diamonds in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sierra Leone, as well as the role of oil in Sudan.

Consequently, the dynamics of a war economy provide analysts with useful insights as to why certain conflicts – particularly those in Africa – have dragged on, despite the number of diplomatic initiatives and peace efforts.

The economic theory of civil conflict

Recent research conducted by the World Bank (WB)* argues that civil wars are more a result of rebel groups competing with national governments for the control of natural resources and primary commodities, rather than being the result of any political, ideological, ethnic or religious difference. Although this economic theory of conflict provides sound reasoning for the occurrence and sustainability of certain conflicts, it is not without its own limitations and weaknesses. The major ones are:

1. The economic causes and reasons for war are not exclusive and are not applicable to all conflicts. The argument forwarded by the study identifies the dependence on primary commodities as a curse for such states. The study suggests that a country's natural resources are in themselves the cause of civil wars, and not the exploitation of such assets. This argument implies that in the absence of a dependence on primary commodities – and, therefore, in the absence of primary commodities itself – there would be no conflict. At the expense of being general, the study does not consider rebel movements that have had little or no access to exploitable resources, but have nonetheless maintained their armed opposition against their enemy. For example, the Mai-Mai in the DRC (especially in the eastern part) have operated for decades with only revenue from local supporters, and have made use of primitive weapons like machetes. The recent case of hostage-taking by the Abu Sayyaf rebels in the Philippines demonstrates that rebels will operate even where there are no natural resources to exploit, with the result that they can even turn to the kidnapping of humans.

2. The theory articulated by the WB places all emphasis on civil war and the operations of a rebel
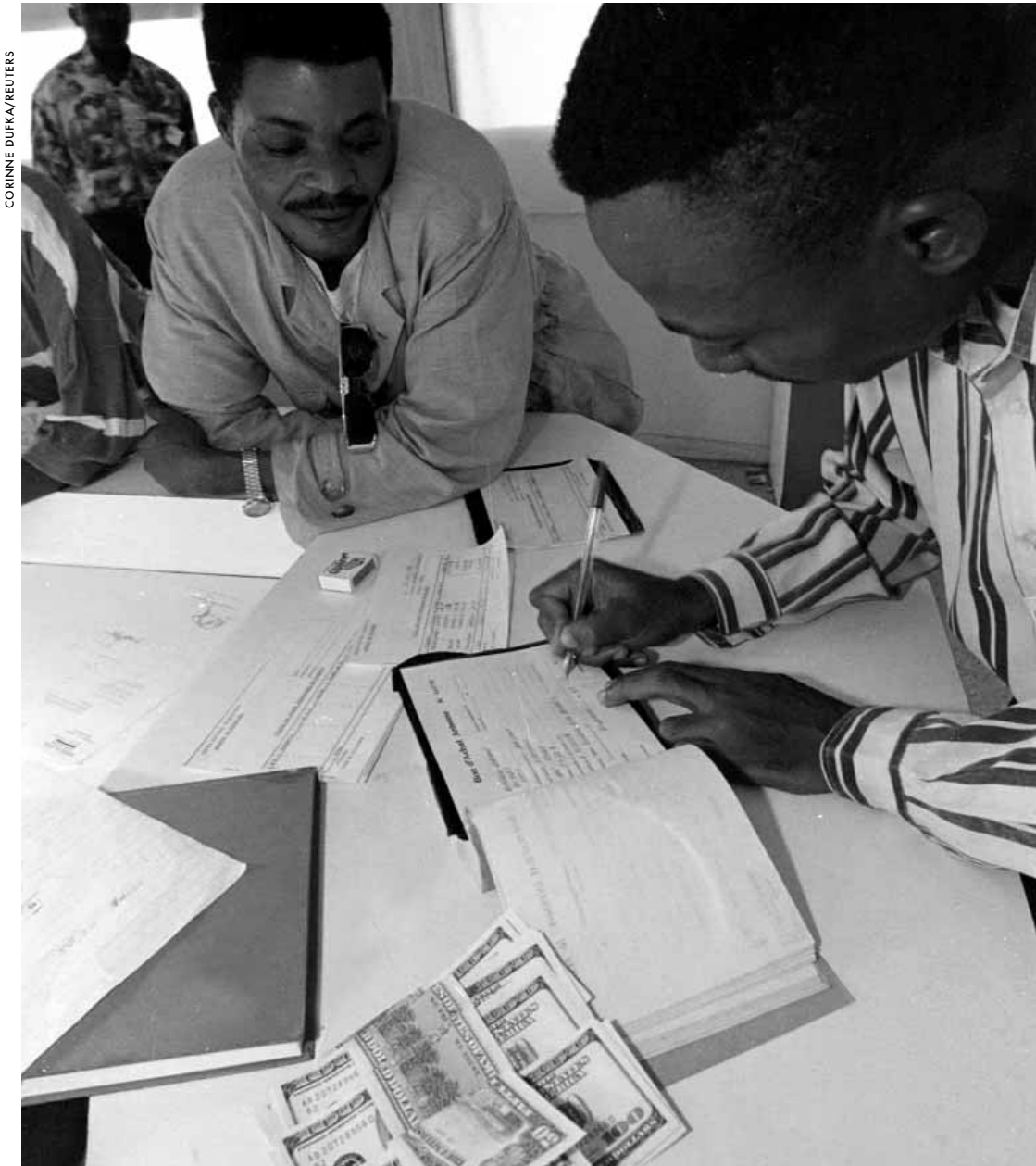
CORINNE DUFKA/REUTERS

A diamond trader is paid in dollars at a buyers consession in Kisangani

movement, without examining the commercial activities of national militaries in interstate conflicts. The external dimension of the current DRC conflict is a case in point. According to Chris Dietrich (2000:3), the deployment of troops from the defence forces of Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe in the Congo, marks the increasing utilisation of national militaries as tools for private financial gain by the political and military elite in these countries. This, he says, is a new trend, whereby military mandates have been altered to suit the financial criteria of generals and

their politician business partners. Uganda's intervention in the Congo has been timeously linked to the economic rewards reaped from its occupation of territory in the eastern part of the country. Many foreign gold mining companies registered in Uganda, are involved primarily in prospecting and do very little mining itself. However, Uganda's gold exports have been soaring. According to reports of official figures, sales reached US$110 million in 1998, compared to only US$35 million in 1997. A Ugandan government document revealed that only two percent of all the country's gold exports were

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Commission agents wait outside diamond merchants shops in Kinshasa

from domestic sources. Given such military commercialism, the WB study does not consider the expropriation of a country's resources through the deployment of national armies.

3. The WB study does not consider strategic alliances as a factor in the sustainability of conflicts or civil wars. The involvement of Sudan and Uganda in the DRC conflict illustrates this argument clearly. The governments of Sudan and Uganda went to war because of each one's support for the rebel movements that were trying to oust the other. Simply put, Uganda supported the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) because Khartoum backed the Lords Resistence Army and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Sudan, therefore, rallied to the support of Kabila because its enemy, Uganda, was at war with the DRC government. During that time, Rwanda and Uganda assisted UNITA rebels in the transportation of military hardware and the sale of diamonds, because Angola was backing Kinshasa. In other words, the military 'logic' of strategic alliances – based on 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' – was readily employed in the 'second rebellion' of the DRC. Consequently, strategic alliances are able to sustain the operations of rebel movements

through military and financial support.

The United Nations response to war economies in Africa

The UN's response was to establish panels of investigation to collect the necessary evidence of how warring sides were exploiting natural resources to fund protracted conflicts in Africa; and to make the necessary recommendations regarding the action to be taken against these belligerents, as well as the governments that colluded with them. One of the main objectives of these panels is to prevent future outbreaks of similar armed aggression. Accordingly, the UN set-up:

- a panel of experts to investigate violations of Security Council sanctions against UNITA;
- a panel of experts to investigate links between diamond and arms trafficking in Sierra Leone; and
- a panel of experts to investigate the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the DRC.

The reports from Sierra Leone and the DRC was only completed in October and November 2000, respectively. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council has not implemented the recommendations of the

report on the violation of sanctions against UNITA, which was completed in March 2000. Instead, the UN Security Council has been content with merely warning those countries that they may face penalties should they violate embargoes against UNITA rebels.

In the absence of providing any concrete action to implement the recommendations, the UN Security Council approved a new sanctions monitoring mechanism for Angola. The Security Council resolution 1295, passed in mid-April this year, requested that the secretary-general establish a monitoring mechanism of up to five experts to further investigate violations of the arms and fuel embargo on UNITA, as well as the ban on rebel movement diamond sales. The new team was expected to present a report on how to improve the sanctions regime against UNITA by 18 October 2000. A decision was taken on 18 November 2000 regarding the 'appropriate action' against those who violate sanctions. 'Additional measures' against UNITA were also considered.

Responding to the debate over whether resolution 1295 should have demanded immediate penalties against named sanctions-busters, Robert Fowler, Angolan sanctions committee chairman and Canadian ambassador to the UN, said, 'The purpose of the resolution is, instead, to provide all states with the opportunity to answer the allegations of the Expert Panel, to end sanctions-violations where they have occurred, and to bring their actions into conformity with the clearly-articulated will of the international community.' Fowler's answer was, in fact, an acknowledgement of the incapacity of the UN to enforce any punitive action against those countries that have violated sanctions against UNITA.

Moreover, the response of the sanctions committee chairman was a revelation of the conundrum that the UN finds itself in. On the one hand, the UN has established an investigation panel to determine how sanctions that have already been imposed, are being violated. On the other hand, this very investigating unit is recommending the imposition of addition sanctions against other states. In other words, the action recommended by the panel is the very action that the UN has been unable to enforce and which brought about the establishment of the panel itself. Meanwhile, UNITA announced in early September that it would continue to sell diamonds in defiance of UN sanctions, which were designed to prevent UNITA from buying arms and therefore prolonging a 25-year-old war.

In the past, Savimbi has used the 1991 Bicesse and 1994 Lusaka peace agreements as a shield of peace to allow his rebel movement to dig diamonds, rearm and subsequently emerge reinvigorated, and dangerous enough to threaten even the heavily defended oil fields in the north-eastern coastal town of Soyo. Analysts fear that under a new peace agreement, this could happen again. Given Savimbi's war record, Western governments with major oil interests in Angola are reportedly backing the MPLA government's hard line military position. It was subsequently argued that the campaign to ban UNITA's diamond sales was driven primarily by oil interests. Under these circumstances, Western powers will be content to maintain Savimbi's distance from the on-shore oil fields, without really making any effort to enforce the recommendations of the investigation panels.

Conclusion

Although the exploitation of natural resources is not the only cause of conflicts, contemporary wars could be better understood if the dynamics of war economies are taken into consideration, particularly when trying to understand why certain conflicts have become intractable. However, more research is needed on the nature of actual war economies, particularly with regard to their trans-border characteristics and smuggling networks. Such knowledge would be useful when attempting to improve commercial and governmental compliance to restrict these destabilising international trade circuits. Finally, it is important to note that access to war machinery – be it light or conventional weapons; financed by cash, diamonds or other commodities – has not been the absolute cause of wars, but has, instead, encouraged and prolonged them into more lethal conflicts. ◭

Endnotes

*Suggested reading

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This paper was presented to the International Ministerial Diamond Conference held in Pretoria, South Africa on 20 September 2000.

Sagaren Naidoo is a senior researcher at the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD).

BY S. CALLAGHAN & S. MAKHUBU

preventive action

ACCORD hosted a Conflict Prevention Seminar in Malawi during the run-up to local government elections. An analysis of the political situation highlighted rising tension between the two opposition parties – Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) and Malawi Congress Party (MCP) – and the ruling United Democratic Front (UDF). This followed accusations by the opposition that the UDF was planning to rig the polls with the assistance of the Electoral Commission.

'Based on our tracking and analysis of political events in Malawi, we felt it necessary to engage the various stakeholders in constructive dialogue,' said Sizwile Makhubu, programme manager of ACCORD's Preventive Action Programme.

The Preventive Action Programme was estab-lished to track political events in the southern African sub-region, with a view to generating early warning data that would trigger preventive action initiatives.

'Strategic pro-active investment in peace is far more cost effective than reacting to the conse-quences of dispute or conflict. It is with this in mind that ACCORD engages southern African countries in conflict prevention.'

The Malawi intervention was a joint initiative between the Preventive Action Programme and the Malawian NGO, Development Centre. The seminar sought to foster an understanding of the theory and practice of preventive diplomacy, in order to strengthen the capacity of both civil society and parliamentarians in the area of conflict prevention.

The seminar drew together parliamentarians from Malawi's main political parties, as well as representatives from several civil society organisations. Civil society representatives came from women's groups, the legal society, church organisations and unions – all explored conflict management and multi-track conflict prevention.

'We sought to enable the various stakeholders to assume collective responsibility for transcending the challenges that confront Malawi,' Makhubu said. 'We [embrace] the notion that the greater the effort in peacemaking, the greater the chances [are] of success.'

Some of the key challenges that face Malawi were highlighted: delegates noted allegations of corruption in government; the partiality of the electoral commission; and the lack of an independent judicial system. However, participants also stressed the need to acknowledge the positive efforts of other stakeholders in resolving the potential conflict situation. Delegates highlighted the need for a strong opposition to applaud the government for positive actions, while still being able to remain critical when necessary. Furthermore, the critical role of civil society was recognised, with specific reference to the role of woman and the church in conflict prevention and management.

'The significance of civil society in advocating democracy and good governance has been widely acknowledged. Civil society is faced with the challenge of assuming an active role in the prevention and resolution of disputes in such a way, that they do not compete with state actors, but rather compliment genuine efforts in peacemaking,' said Makhubu.

Participants recognised the need to engage all the relevant stakeholders on an ongoing basis, so that positive efforts towards peace and stability could be sustained.

The seminar provided participants with an opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions freely in an enabling environment. Participants left with a spirit of optimism and determination to participate effectively in Malawi's quest for political and socio-economic development.

Endnote

Sizwile Makhubu is the Programme Officer within the Preventive Action Programme at ACCORD.

turning information into action

Ongoing monitoring of all conflict situations across Africa is undertaken on a daily basis to generate ACCORD's Conflict Watch and Renaissance Barometer reports. Indepth situation reports are also complied in response to the requirements of ACCORD's directorate. The Preventative Action Programme analyses the information gathered on each of the SADC countries on monthly basis as part of ACCORD's conflict update series. These country reports cover conflict indicators and occurrences in the region and serve as a basis for developing intervention strategies.

Preventive Action

Poll described as a failure
and a shame to democracy

DEMOCRACY

BY JACOMIEN VAN DER BIJ

poll
triggers violence

On 29 October 2000, presidential and parliamentary elections took place on the mainland of Tanzania, as well as on the islands of Zanzibar. Only minor irregularities were reported during the mainland elections and independent observers described the mainland vote as being generally free and fair. On the islands, however, tensions emerged both before and after the elections, and international observers described them as 'a failure and a shame to democracy'.

There were two main parties that contested for the presidency and parliamentary seats on the islands: the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), with Amani Abedi Karuma running for president; and the Civic United Front (CUF), with Seif Sharif Hamad running for the presidency.

Since 1995, both parties have not seen eye to

eye because of a disagreement over the 1995 election results. The CUF, backed by international electoral observers, has claimed that the elections were rigged. The CUF lost the election by less than one percent. The distrust between the CCM and the CUF caused a build-up of tension during the run-up to the elections, which ended in chaos and violence. During the aftermath of the elections, there were reports of violent clashes between police and opposition sympathisers. According to reports, riot police fired teargas and rubber bullets at protesters.

The violence erupted as a result of suspected fraud and widespread election irregularities. There were reports that voting material arrived late, and in some cases, did not arrive at all. In addition, the opening of some polling stations was delayed.

A riot policeman chases a resident in Zanzibar who police alleged was throwing stones at them

Tension also increased when the vote counting process was stopped by authorities in places where the exercise had gone well – in such cases, the ballot boxes were transferred against the will of party agents. The boxes were taken to unknown destinations for safekeeping, which only increased the suspicion of opposition parties.

Although international observers and opposition parties requested a new election for the entire archipelago, the Zanzibar Electoral Committee (ZEC) decided to allow a rerun in only 16 of the 50 constituencies where voting was said to have been a complete farce. Opposition parties boycotted the exercise and demanded a complete rerun of the Zanzibar elections. They refused to recognise the election results unless a complete rerun was undertaken. In addition, the CUF decided to withdraw from the entire electoral process on 6 November 2000.

The end result of the elections is that the CCM remains the ruling party, with more than 90% of the 182 seats in the mainland. The party also clinched 66% of the votes in Zanzibar. As the latest elections have driven the CCM and CUF even further apart, prospects for an agreement between the two parties appear bleak, and political tension is likely to rise on the islands due to the disputed elections.

Endnote

Jacomien van der bij served an internship with ACCORD in 2000.

REUTERS

Conflict Trends spoke to the
United Nations Secretary-General
for Peacekeeping, Mr Guéhenno

INTERVIEW

BY KWEZI MNGQIBISA

Conflict Trends: There are a number of peace-keeping training initiatives in Africa that aim to build the capacity of militaries to undertake peace operations on the continent. Are there any steps that can be taken in the foreseeable future to standardise training?

Mr Guéhenno: Member states are responsible for training the troops they contribute to UN peacekeeping. However, it is the job of the training unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to set standards and provide curricula guidelines. This responsibility includes offering assistance to member states through their own evaluations of troop readiness.

The training unit also provides support for joint training exercises, which are one of the best methods of developing coherence and cohesion in a peacekeeping force. In addition to these activities, there are a number of peacekeeping training centres throughout the world, which the DPKO training unit cooperates with.

Conflict Trends: The Brahimi Report contains some recommendations aimed at improving the conduct of peacekeeping operations. What are the UNDPKO's areas of priority and what are the most notable challenges in meeting them?

Mr Guéhenno: The Brahimi Report is a very welcome analysis of the problems that have been faced by peacekeepers. It makes extremely useful, wide-ranging recommendations on ways in which to address these problems.

We can divide the recommendations into two broad areas. Firstly those to the member states, which deal with the clarity of mandates and the resources necessary to implement them. This includes the availability of troops and other personnel to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of the operation. Such recommendations may prove difficult to implement, because they hinge on the political will of governments. However, there is no real alternative. The UN's member states, and especially the permanent members of the Security Council, are responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. If this commitment is to be understood as more than mere rhetoric, practical actions will be required.

Secondly, we require an effective headquarters in New York. We must make both qualitative and quantitative improvements. The existing ratio is approximately one percent of headquarters to field personnel. This is appallingly low and makes it difficult to provide direction.

The establishment of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution in 1993, as well as a strengthening of the peace and security dimensions of both ECOWAS and SADC, have broadened the scope of cooperation between these organisations and the UN. The relationship between the UN and OAU has improved as a result of close contacts and regular consultations between the secretary-generals of the two organisations. The UN liaison office in Addis Ababa, and the DPKO military liaison officer attached to the OAU, have helped to strengthen coordination with the OAU in peacekeeping activities.

In the DRC, the UN mission (MONUC) and the OAU coordinate activities, including co-deployment with and logistical support to the Joint Military Commission (JMC). The UN also provided technical assistance to the OAU-designated facilitator, in support of his efforts to promote inter-Congolese dialogue. The UN and OAU are also

cooperating closely in Ethiopia and Eritrea to support the implementation of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, as well as to provide support for the continued efforts of the OAU mediation. In Western Sahara, the UN continues to cooperate with the OAU in furthering the peace process.

The UN maintains close working relationships with SADC and ECOWAS in their respective efforts to implement the Lusaka and Lomé Agreements.

The UN continues to facilitate contacts between regional organisations and countries that contribute troops, as well as those donors that can provide logistical support and equipment. The secretary-general has also continued his appeal for adequate and flexible contributions, for both the UN Trust Fund and the OAU Peace Fund, to support peacekeeping activities in Africa.

Notwithstanding the increasing determination of African States and regional organisations to play their role, the lack of essential logistical capacity has remained a serious obstacle to a timely and effective African response to peacekeeping. Shortages of specialised units with sophisticated material, such as aircraft, communication or engineering equipment, also remain a serious concern. More reliable arrangements have to be made to ensure that sustained support is provided to adequately equip their formed units through burden-sharing. The early requisition, as well as pre-positioning of the requisite stock of basic equipment to begin operations, would also enhance Africa's peacekeeping capacity. The implementation of the relevant recommendations in the Brahimi Report could contribute to effectively addressing these issues.

Conflict Trends: Due to a lack of resources to sustain peace operations for the duration that they are usually required, there are calls for the UN to employ the services of private military companies. What is the view of the UN on this?

Mr Guéhenno: The assumption that peace operations cannot be sustained because they lack resources is ill-founded. Our missions in India, Pakistan and Jerusalem have been in existence since 1948. The mission in Cyprus has been going since 1964, the Golan mission since 1974 and the Lebanon mission since 1978. Other currently operational missions were formed in the 1990s. The lack of resources is more of a problem at the beginning of a mission, when we need to deploy rapidly.

However, your question really addresses another issue – that of the use of mercenaries as a substitute for peacekeeping troops. The International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries prohibits the use of private military organisations by member states, and the question of their use by the UN is therefore moot.

Consequently, the solution to any shortfall within peacekeeping forces is not to be found in private military companies, but rather in sufficient political will by those member states that can contribute troops.

Conflict Trends: Some hold the view that the UN's commitment to peacekeeping in Africa has always been viewed as less important than its commitments elsewhere resulting in an insufficient response to the peacekeeping needs of the continent. What is your view?

Mr Guéhenno: There have been 55 peacekeeping missions authorised by the Security Council since the UN was founded 55 years ago. No less than 20 of these have been in Africa.

The total cost of all peacekeeping operations since 1948 is US$20 billion. The total cost of all peace-keeping in Africa amounts to US$7 billion and is completely in keeping with the percentage of mandates assigned to the continent.

Some of these missions have been very successful. Others, less so. One, in particular, was a tragic failure. The UN is currently implementing a series of recommendations, based on the Brahimi Report, to improve its peace operations. Among these recommendations is the clearly stated need to ensure mandates have the resources needed to implement them effectively. When these recommendations are put in place, future UN peace operations should be in a better position to respond to the increasingly complex environments that characterise modern peacekeeping. Nowhere are such environments more evident than in Africa.

However, whatever problems peacekeeping has encountered in it's African operations, none of these problems can be ascribed to an unfair share of resources when compared to all peacekeeping operations, nor can they be ascribed to a lack of concern on the part of the UN. The failure of political will by the parties to a conflict; the inability or unwillingness of the member states to provide peacekeeping with what is required to get the job done; the adoption of unrealistic mandates by the Security Council – all these factors have played their part in limiting the success of UN peacekeeping efforts, not only in Africa, but elsewhere too. ◬

36 percent of all peacekeeping mandates have been devoted to conflicts in Africa

Congo
1960-1964

Yemen
1963-1964

Angola
1988-1998
(4 missions)

Namibia
1989-1990

Western Sahara
1988 to present

Somalia
1992-1995
(2 missions)

Mozambique
1992-1994

Uganda-Rwanda
1993-1996

Liberia
1993-1997

Rwanda
1996-1996

Chad-Libya
1994

Central African Republic
1998-2000

Sierra Leone
1998 to present
(2 missions)

DRC
established 2000

Ethiopia-Eritrea
established 2000

Swiss Democracy: Possible Solutions to Conflict in Multicultural Societies

Wolf Linder, 1998, St. Martin's Press Inc., New York.

It is often asserted that we live in a globalising world and that our planet increasingly represents a 'global village'. Witness the increasing prominence of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in national economies, or the rise of such regional blocs as the European Union, the Association of South East Asian Nations, or the Economic Community of West African States. In essence, globalisation is characterised by convergence at the socio-cultural, political and economic levels.

However, one of the most puissant contradictions of the current epoch, is that such convergence coexists with divergence based on identity and difference. Religious fundamentalism, virulent nationalism and ethnicity all form part of this divergence. It was divergence that caused the painful disintegration of former Yugoslavia. It was this divergence that pitted Indonesian against Timorese nationalism, and it was this divergence that, at the time of writing, resulted in Philippine Muslims kidnapping foreign tourists to be used as hostages and bargaining chips to pressurise their government for a separate Muslim homeland.

Africa, too, has not been immune from the politics of identity and exclusion: Angola has seen Ovimbundu versus Mbundu; Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi continue a macabre dance of death; Senegal and the Comoros have been plagued by strong separatist movements in Casamance and Anjouan; Mozambique has witnessed Shangaan pitted against Ndau; Islamic militants have been active from Khartoum to Kaduna; and Christian fundamentalism, in the form of the Lord's Resistance Army, continues to ravage northern Uganda. Further complicating the African situation are the inherited colonial borders, which have resulted in few post – independence African states being homogeneous in character. Exacerbating such differences are deteriorating economies that have resulted in greater alienation, and have pitted one group against another, as seen in recent fighting between Ijaw and Itsekeri youth in the Delta State of Nigeria.

For most African States, then, the challenge is how to manage such differences, and at the same time, build an overarching construct of citizenship. This is where Wolf Linder's book is so useful. Linder provides a critical dissection of Swiss democracy in theory and practice, and illustrates its relevance to other multicultural societies struggling to manage such differences. Switzerland is a country characterised by cultural, linguistic, religious and regional diversity. As a country, it has existed for more than 700 years. What accounts for this success? According to the author, it is because the Swiss have, over the years, developed unique institutions aimed at minimising any conflict emanating from such differences. Consider the following, 'First, Switzerland renounced the idea of creating a one-culture, one language nation-state. Second, the Swiss were able to develop a type of democracy that favours and enforces political power-sharing between Protestants and Catholics, between the German-speaking majority and French-, Italian and Romansch-speaking minorities, and between organised employers and trade unions. This has led to social integration, peaceful conflict resolution by negotiation, and national consensus amongst a once-fragmented and heterogenous population' (p. xviii).

Linder also notes how ordinary citizens are involved in the decision-making processes. For example, the author highlights how Swiss citizens not only participate in parliamentary elections, but also vote and ratify parliamentary decisions of major importance. In this way, all feel ownership of the political institutions, processes and outcomes. This Swiss form of direct democracy, in my view, would also resonate very well with traditional forms of African governance.

Importantly, Linder stresses that it is not the formal design of the institutions alone, but also the underlying political culture, that makes consensus democracy work. Consequently, for African policy-makers, the challenge is not only the construction of more inclusive institutions which reflect the needs and concerns of all citizens. The challenge is also to change attitudes so that citizens respect difference and are aware of their rights and responsibilities in a democracy, and act accordingly. Of course, Swiss consociational democracy cannot simply be imported to African soil, especially given the specificity of the conditions prevailing on the continent. This is not what the author suggests. However, the Swiss experience is fascinating and holds some valuable insights for African scholars and policy-makers.

The book's lucid style and its various tables, boxes and figures all contribute to a highly enjoyable and thought provoking read. ◬

NORTH AFRICA

ALGERIA

8 November 2000 – The human rights group, Amnesty International, requested that high ranking army officials (including the army chief of staff, General Lamari) respond to questions about human rights violations during Algeria's eight-year-old civil war. The conflict dates back to 1992, when the government, with the support of the army, cancelled the general elections.

13 November 2000 – The government intensified its efforts to fight rebels in the country when it closed down the offices of the banned Wafa group. Government officials maintain that the group is nothing but a front for the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

9 December 2000 – Following an army operation in the Ain Defla and Chlef areas, it was reported that 25 Muslim rebels were killed. The rebels are believed to have been members of the Islamic Armed Group (GIA).

18 December 2000 – The death toll of people killed during the holy month of Ramadan rose to 200 when it was reported that 50 more people were killed over the weekend.

29 December 2000 – A presidential statement announced that President Bouteflika was due to make an official visit to Sudan to enhance cooperation between the two countries. The visit will be the first by an Algerian leader in many years.

EGYPT

15 November 2000 – It was estimated that 10 people were killed and 70 more injured during election violence in the country.

21 November 2000 – It was reported that Egypt had decided to recall its diplomatic representative from Israel because of the ongoing Israeli war and aggression against Palestine.

31 December 2000 – Security agencies arrested 20 people suspected of belonging to the banned Muslim Brotherhood in Fayoum Province.

LIBYA

24 November 2000 – The US government decided to maintain its sanctions against Libya when it extended, for another year, the ban on US passport holders entering Libya.

29 November 2000 – Judges presiding over the Lockerbie trial turned down a request to acquit Al-Amin Khalifa Fahima, one of the two people accused of the Pan Am Plane bombing in 1998. The judges stated that Fahima had, among other things, kept the explosive material in his desk.

MOROCCO

30 November 2000 – No less than 13 students, who were members of the banned Islamist group, Al-adl Wal Ihsane – outlawed in 1990 – were each given two year sentences following their arrest during clashes at the University in Mohamedia.

10 December 2000 – The Independent Moroccan Human Rights Association claimed that Moroccan police had arrested human rights activists, who took part in a protest march, calling for investigations into past human rights violations.

WESTERN SAHARA

9 November 2000 – During a protest march in 'occupied areas', Moroccan police killed 25 youths.

24 November 2000 – Leader of the Polisario Front, Mohamed Abdelaziz rejected any 'third way' proposals to resolve Western Sahara's independence. Abdelaziz called upon the international community to intensify its support of the UN plan and to continue pressurising Morocco to abide by the plan.

WEST AFRICA

BURKINA FASO

12 November 2000 – The *Parti pour la democratie et le progres* (PD) turned down an offer to join the government on the grounds that the ruling party failed to meet their demands.

GUINEA

21 November 2000 – The UNHCR team in Guinea, together with officials from the US State Department, visited refugee camps in Guinea, where more than 450,000 nationals from Sierra Leone and Liberia have taken refuge. The team stated that despite efforts to protect refugees against attacks, their security situation had not yet improved.

24 November 2000 – The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that about 88 people had died from Yellow Fever in Guinea since the outbreak of the disease.

15 December 2000 – The World Food Programme (WFP) announced the suspension of its activities in Guekedou, where it was assisting about 300,000 refugees and internally displaced persons.

29 December 2000 – The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) announced its plans to erect new refugee camps in the country to house about 60,000 internally displaced persons who had ran away from Guekedou as a result of renewed tensions in the area.

GUINEA-BISSAU

1 November 2000 – The government of Guinea-Bissau repatriated 50 alleged members of the Movement for Democracy, a rebel group opposed to the current government in Senegal.

23 November 2000 – An exchange of gunfire took place between forces loyal to ousted chief of staff, Major-General Seabra, and those of General Ansumane Mane. Seabra was recently relieved of his duties as chief of staff. He was replaced by General Nan Batcha.

IVORY COAST

6 November 2000 – The African Commission on Human and People's Rights passed a resolution aimed at urging the OAU to form a commission of enquiry into the post-election violence in the Ivory Coast. About 171 people were killed during post-election clashes in late October.

4 December 2000 – Supporters of former prime minister, Alassane Outtara, who were members of the *Rassemblement des Republicains* (RDR), took to the street following a ruling by the Supreme Court that the former prime minister was not eligible to stand for office because he was not a fully fledged Ivorian national.

LIBERIA

22 November 2000 – Liberian officials claimed armed men attacked northern Nimba County, in yet another cross-border incursion. The two countries have long traded accusations about harbouring dissidents.

22 December 2000 – The UN panel responsible for investigating Revolutionary United Front (RUF) arms and trade dealings named Liberia as one of the main supporters of the rebel group. According to the panel, Liberia provided training and weapons, and also served as a sanctuary for RUF rebels.

NIGERIA

1 November 2000 – According to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, the country experienced about 800 incidents of oil pipeline destruction, which resulted in a huge loss of revenue and the death of numerous people. The acts of vandalism were said to be part of strategies used by militant youths to draw the government's attention to problems faced by their people.

20 November 2000 – Government officials said that about US$200,000 was needed to rebuild the infrastructure which was destroyed during a pipeline fire in southern Delta. A bridge and large hectares of farmland will need to be re-established.

30 November 2000 – Leaders from the south-eastern states of Nigeria called on the government to establish a commission of enquiry into oil and gas related disasters within their communities. The leaders also appealed for the creation of a Niger Delta Development Bank which would enable them to have control of their own resources.

30 November 2000 – The Osun State fired 5,000 civil servants in an attempt to meet increased wage demands. State authorities said that all the fired workers were either those approaching retirement age, or those with a poor service record.

2 December 2000 – The government deployed troops in the town of Okigwe in order to fight the activities of an alleged secessionist movement called the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). The troops were deployed following clashes between the police and a group of MASSOB activists.

14 December 2000 – Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued a report which stated that human rights abuses (for example, summary executions) at the hand of security agencies still continued in the Niger Delta.

SIERRA LEONE

1 November 2000 – The UN secretary-general called on all countries to make their troops available for the UN mission in Sierra Leone. The appeal was made following an announcement that India and Jordan were withdrawing their forces from the mission.

7 November 2000 – According to a report issued by Save the Children Fund (SCF), children in Sierra Leone suffer the most as a result of civil war. Apart from being raped and tortured, many of

SEYLLOU/AFP

Sierra Leone nationals cook in front of the embassy in Guinea. Guinea security forces rounded up some 3,000 Sierra Leone and Liberian refugees in Conakry accusing them of fuelling a rebellion

them suffered as child soldiers, who make up about 80% of rebel fighters in the country. The report also revealed that the child mortality rate in Sierra Leone is 312 for every 1,000 births, as compared to the global average of 67 for every 1,000 births.

14 November 2000 – According to the UNHCR, more than 22,000 Sierra Leone nationals, who had taken refuge in Guinea, were forced to return to their country because of the ongoing cross-border raids in Guinea. The commission revealed that about 9,000 of them had been settled in 40 village communities in Lungi.

15 November 2000 – The WFP launched an appeal for US$65 million in order to avert a humanitarian crisis in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. According to the WFP, more than 50,000 people had been displaced since ongoing sporadic fighting began in Guinea.

1 December 2000 – HRW issued a report in which it stated that human rights abuses continued in Sierra Leone. The ongoing violations were said to be carried out by RUF rebels, both within the country and in neighbouring Guinea.

15 December 2000 – The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that there were at least 500,000 internally displaced persons in Sierra Leone, and during 2000 alone, about 200,000 people were forced to leave their homes because of the crisis in the country.

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

3 November 2000 – Intense fighting was reported between the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) and UNITA over control of the town of Umpulo in the province of Bie. Umpulo is now regarded as UNITA's base, following the fall and capture of Bailundo and Andulo, two traditional UNITA bases.

9 November 2000 – The UN secretary-general's representative on internally displaced persons, Francis Deng, ended his ten-day visit to Angola, where he made an assessment of the current situation regarding displaced persons. Deng noted that although there had been progress, any meaningful improvements were hampered by the ongoing civil war and its subsequent effects on the civilian population.

9 November 2000 – The *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (MSF) released a report in which it detailed the suffering and inhumane conditions that ordinary Angolans had to endure as a result of the conflict. As a result, the internal situation was worsening.

15 November 2000 – The UN launched an appeal for US$202 million in order enhance its humanitarian work in the country. The UN stated that its work in Angola was affected by an inaccessibility to most areas, as well as increased insecurity as the war continues between the two conflicting parties.

1 December 2000 – UNITA rejected the amnesty law passed by the country's parliament, which offered to extend general amnesty to the rebel movement. The amnesty, which was part of President Dos Santos' pardon in celebration of the country's 25 years of independence, was described by UNITA as 'bait'.

12 December 2000 – Angola concluded an agreement with the IMF, which includes the introduction of various economic reform programmes. According to the agreement, the government will have to lay off 20% of its civil servants, which translates to about 60,000 job loses. It is also expected that the agreement will be boosted by the increase in petroleum revenue, as well as a decline in military spending.

15 December 2000 – The WFP issued an urgent warning that it would have to cut down the number of its operations unless it received new funds from international donors.

29 December 2000 – It was reported that Benguela Airport, which is situated in the southern part of the country, was attacked by UNITA rebels.

29 December 2000 – The UN team, which is looking into sanctions-busting in Angola, recommended to the Security Council that it should institute sanctions against all countries that violated the imposed arms and trade embargo against UNITA.

CAMEROON

13 November 2000 – Members of the opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF) were prevented by the country's security agencies from staging a march for an independent electoral commission.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

24 November 2000 – More than 10,000 trade union activists continued with their protest action over pay disputes in the country's capital, Bangui. The majority of protesters were civil servants who complained that they had to live without their salaries for several months.

CHAD

22 November 2000 – The director of cabinet

at the Ministry of Communication, Issa Ibrahim, rejected accusations that the country's army was training young people in Sarh. The statement followed a report that the government was forcibly training youths in order to take part in a new government offensive against the rebel group, Movement for Democracy and Justice (MDJT).

20 December 2000 – The chairman of the Chad Electoral Commission recommended that the country's elections – due to be held in March 2001 – be postponed due to financial difficulties. According to the chairman, holding the elections at the stipulated date would not be feasible because not enough money had been received to conduct the elections.

DRC

3 November 2000 – The UNHCR stated that about 18,000 Angolans were to take refuge in the DRC district of Kahemba. According to UNHCR spokesman, Kris Janowski, Kahemba is already home to 10,000 Angolans who had fled from the conflict in their own country.

3 November 2000 – The WFP reported that there was an urgent need for humanitarian assistance in the north and south Kivu Provinces in eastern DRC. The report stated that the number of refugees in these areas had increased, whilst the amount of food available had remained the same.

3 November 2000 – It was reported that the Goma-based Congolese Rally for Democracy was involved in a major leadership reshuffle following the resignation of its president, Emile Ilunga, as well as two of his vice-presidents.

6 November 2000 – The situation in Bunia was reported to be tense following an unsuccessful attempt to 'overthrow' Ernest Wamba dia Wamba of the RCD-ML. Problems and internal rivalry within the RCD-ML culminated in Wamba dia Wamba's firing two of his deputies whom he accused of mutiny.

10 November 2000 – The UN assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping, Hedi Annabi, informed the Security Council that proper deployment of the DRC mission had been hampered by a number of problems. Annabi cited the uncertainty regarding the status of the Lusaka Agreement, as well as the inability of UN staff to move freely within the country, as two of the problems.

20 November 2000 – During a recent cabinet reshuffle, President Kabila replaced Yerodia Ndombasi as the country's foreign minister. The newly appointed foreign minister is Leonard She Okitundu, who was the former Minister for Human Rights. The removal of Ndombasi coincided with the International Court of Justice's hearing on an international arrest warrant for the former minister, which had been filed by Belgium on the grounds of inciting ethnic tension and hatred in the country.

28 November 2000 – The UN humanitarian coordinator described the DRC crisis as the worst in terms of it being a humanitarian crisis. According to information provided by the International Rescue Committee, 1,7 million people (including 600,000 children) had died as a result of the war in eastern DRC.

28 November 2000 – The leader of the opposition UPDS, Etienne Tshisekedi, repeated his calls for a meeting of all parties and other political formations which are opposed to the current rule of President Kabila. Tshisekedi also emphasised the importance of holding internal dialogue in order to map out the country's future.

1 December 2000 – It was reported that about 500 DRC troops, who had taken refuge in Zambia, went on a hunger strike to convince Zambian authorities to repatriate them. Out of about 547 DRC soldiers who entered Zambia, only 34 revoked their status and are currently in consultation with the UNHCR.

4 December 2000 – Rebel leaders from the RCD-Goma and the MLC denied reports that the former was still occupying the town of Banalia, which is located 100km north of Kisangani. RCD-Goma leadership also denied reports that there was tension between the two movements.

18 December 2000 – The African Human Rights Association (AZADHO) accused the government of executing a number of soldiers and civilians in Kivu. AZADHO maintained that it had evidence which showed that the government was responsible for the alleged executions three months ago.

22 December 2000 – Leaders of the RCD-ML decided against sending any delegation to a meeting called by President Kabila in Libreville, Gabon. According to the RCD-ML, the meeting fell outside the Lusaka agreement. Consequently, they will only attend a gathering called by the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire.

28 December 2000 – A renewed outbreak of clashes between government forces and RCD rebels was reported in Katanga Province.

EAST AFRICA

BURUNDI

3 November 2000 – Health officials in Mwaro Province reported a sudden outbreak of malaria in the area. Current figures show that more than 23,000 people were reported to have been affected by the disease during October.

24 November 2000 – Local newspapers reported that there had been an increase in the number of violent acts in the vicinity of the country's capital. One incident involved the attack and shelling of Musaga, an area close to Bujumbura where two people were wounded and most of the houses destroyed.

26 November 2000 – Spokesperson for the CNDD-FDD, Jerome Ndiho, stated that his organisation would only accept a ceasefire agreement after it was offered an opportunity to have direct talks with the government. However, the call for such direct talks had reportedly been turned down by the Burundi peace facilitator.

27 November 2000 – President Buyoya rejected reports that there was tension regarding who should lead the transitional government in Burundi. Instead, the president stated that the parties to the agreement were discussing the timetable of the agreement, and were therefore still discussing the issue of leadership.

27 December 2000 – A total of 15 people were killed and 12 others wounded following a rebel attack in the village of Butare. The attack is thought to have been carried out by Hutu rebels.

DJIBOUTI

8 December 2000 – Government officials reported that things were back to normal in Djibouti, following an exchange of gunfire between the army and officers loyal to ousted head of police, General Yacin Yabeh Gaab. Six people were reportedly injured and two others killed during the incident.

26 December 2000 – Government officials from the Djibouti Interior Ministry announced that more than 5,000 illegal immigrants were arrested after security agencies carried out a search operation in various towns.

KENYA

1 November 2000 – According to the Semi-Arid Rural Development Programme (SARDP), the southern Kenyan district of Kajiado (which is occupied by Masai pastoralists) could face drought until 2002 due to a two-year-old dry season. It is estimated that the current drought has killed about 80% of livestock within the area.

18 December 2000 – The Kenyan minister of internal security, Marsden Madoka, informed journalists that clashes in the districts of Isiolo, Wajir and Mandera – which led to the killing of about 300 people – were the work of internal leaders, and not foreign forces. The minister's statement ruled out and denied reports that armed men from Ethiopia were responsible for the clashes.

MADAGASCAR

24 November 2000 – Health officials in Madagascar stated that 141 cases of cholera had been recorded since the outbreak was reported earlier in November. Of the reported cases, 14 have died and 15 remain in hospital.

RWANDA

6 November 2000 – An assessment team made up of Rwanda's Ministry of Agriculture, USAID's Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), FAO and WFP reported that

urgent steps needed to be taken in order to deal with the drought-related problems in most south-eastern parts of the country.

10 November 2000 – The government of Rwanda was advised by donor nations to withdraw its troops from the DRC, on the grounds that such involvement impacted negatively on the country's economy.

SOMALIA

2 November 2000 – An exchange of gunfire ensued between security guards at the Lafweyn hotel (where some members of parliament were staying) and a group of protesters who were marching against the current high inflation rates in the country.

20 November 2000 – Health officials revealed that 35 people had died, and more than 80 had been hospitalised, due to a recent outbreak of cholera in central parts of the country.

SUDAN

1 November 2000 – Another opposition party, Ummah Party (UP), announced that it would not partake in the country's presidential and parliamentary elections set for December. The UP became the second party to do so, following an earlier announcement by the Popular National Congress (PNC) – led by the former speaker of parliament, Hasan al-Tubari – that it would not contest the upcoming elections.

2 November 2000 – The Sudan Catholic Information Office accused the Sudanese government of air bombing civilians in Equatoria Province, southern Sudan.

7 November 2000 – The UN secretary-general's special envoy for humanitarian affairs in Sudan, Tom Vraalsen, expressed his concern about the collapse of unilateral humanitarian ceasefires in the country, which had been in place since July 1998. According to Vraalsen, air and ground raids in Sudan had resulted in the killing and displacement of thousands of civilians.

15 November 2000 – The leader of the opposition Ummah Party, Sadeq al-Madhi, who was in exile in Egypt for four years, told journalists that the country's upcoming elections held no significance because the entire process was controlled by the ruling party. The Ummah Party was allowed to

resume its activities in the country this year, after the signing of a reconciliation agreement with Khartoum.

20 November 2000 – Humanitarian agencies working in Sudan stated that 18 people were killed and more than 50 were badly wounded when government soldiers bombed the town of Yei in western Equatoria. Yei is regarded as one of the main strongholds of the opposition movement, Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

22 November 2000 – The US assistant secretary for African affairs called upon Khartoum to cease its air raids against civilian targets in southern Sudan. The US government continues to maintain economic sanctions against Sudan, due to the alleged relations with terrorists organisations.

TANZANIA

8 November 2000 – Amani Abeid Karume, the Zanzibar president elect from Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), took the oath of office following an announcement of the result of an election that was marred by chaos and opposition accusations of election irregularities.

24 November 2000 – USAID-FEWS reported that during October, more than half of the 20,000 tones of maize provided by the government for drought relief purposes, was sold to 1,3 million people at a subsidised price of 50 Tanzania shillings per kilogram, which is lower than market prices.

3 November 2000 – It was reported that ten DRC rebels were killed during clashes with Ugandan forces in the Kasindi market near the DRC-Ugandan border.

4 November 2000 – Health ministry officials from Uganda reported that there were 301 documented cases of the Ebola virus. A total of 99 people have died from the disease.

7 November 2000 – The WFP launched another appeal for US$7,1 million to boost its emergency relief work in Uganda. The appeal was made after the programme decided to extend its operations in the Karamoja region for another six months, due to the fact that a number of people were still facing starvation.

27 November 2000 – The Monitor newspaper reported that more than 3,000 people were forced to flee from their homes due to renewed attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in western Uganda. The report stated that the ADF launched attacks from its bases in the Ruwenzori mountains.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

BOTSWANA

3 November 2000 – A formal complaint was sent to the OAU by representatives of the Basarwa people, who maintain that the government is using a strategy to forcibly disposes them of their land. This information came out of a conference held in Johannesburg, where it was said that about 2,500 San people were removed from their land by the government and were taken to resettlement camps.

LESOTHO

13 December 2000 – The Lesotho Court Marshal sentenced 33 defence force officers to a total of 180 years in jail. The officers were charged with mutiny during the country's political turmoil in 1998. In addition to the sentence, the officers will also be dishonourably discharged from the Lesotho defence force.

MALAWI

1 December 2000 – The Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation reported that a group of landmine experts were in Malawi to assist the government with landmines which had washed downstream from Mozambique as a result of torrential rains.

MOZAMBIQUE

10 November 2000 – The leader of the main opposition RENAMO party, Mr Afonso Dhlakama, stated that demonstrations against the government would continue. The statement was made after violent clashes between opposition marchers and the police led to the killing of 39 people. More than 100 others were injured.

13 November 2000 – The government declared a day of mourning for the 39 people killed when violence erupted between police and protesters. Those who died were opposition supporters who were protesting against the legitimacy of the December 1999 general election.

22 November 2000 – Nine people were killed in southern Mozambique as a result of heavy rains. Authorities are fearing a repeat of the flooding experienced earlier in the year.

24 November 2000 – It was reported that the death toll of detained opposition party members in Montepuez increased to 75, where RENAMO supporters clashed with government security agencies early in November.

24 November 2000 – The WFP reported that about 9,000 people from the district of Xai Xai in southern Mozambique were isolated due to recent torrential rains.

11 December 2000 – Health officials in Maputo reported that the cholera epidemic in the country was increasing rapidly. More than 80 people are admitted to hospital with the disease daily.

12 December 2000 – The Mozambican Association of Human Rights (DHD) reported that suffocation, hunger and thirst were the main causes behind the deaths of 83 prisoners held in Montepuez in November.

18 December 2000 – Finance minister, Luisa Diogo, informed parliament that about half of the country's budget was dependent on the amount of foreign aid received.

NAMIBIA

22 November 2000 – Members of the ruling South West Africa's People's Organisation (SWAPO) staged a demonstration in Rundu, where they called for the deportation of UNITA's representative, Jose Domingos Sikunda.

The demonstrators also blamed UNITA for the continued insecurity and instability in Namibia's Kavango region.

6 December 2000 – Minister of defence, Errki Nghimtina, said the country's security agencies were still heavily deployed in the Caprivi and Kavango regions. Additional security was required in order to maintain stability in the two areas, and to prevent any illegal entry by UNITA rebels.

SOUTH AFRICA

13 November 2000 – The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Health Department enhanced its measures to curb the spread of the foot and mouth disease when it extended the quarantine zone in the province. The ministry hoped to vaccinate 1,3 million animals, which could result in the banning of all cloven-hoofed animals for a period of two years.

7 December 2000 – Amnesty International expressed its concern over the government's proposed Anti-Terrorism Act, which it claims runs counter to international and regional agreements. According to Amnesty International, some sections of the Bill could signal a return of human rights violation perpetrated by the former apartheid government.

12 December 2000 – The South African Human Rights Commission issued a report in which it criticised the manner in which illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers were being treated in South Africa. According to the report, most of the immigrants are often detained for long periods and are also abused by the authorities.

SWAZILAND

5 November 2000 – A group of Swaziland opposition formations met in South Africa and issued a 'Nelspruit Declaration' which called for King Mswati to lift the ban on political parties and to embrace multi-party democracy in the country. The existing ban on free political activity has been in place for the past 27 years.

7 November 2000 – Following a meeting in South Africa, leaders of the pro-democracy movement in Swaziland presented Prime Minister Dlamini with a petition, which called for the establishment of an interim government comprising all the stakeholders which will replace the current

ruling monarch in Swaziland.

24 November 2000 – The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) rejected the government's proposed amendments to the country's labour law. The SFTU stated that the proposed changes would require the unions to take responsibility for all losses suffered as a result of any industrial action.

29 November 2000 – Swaziland trade unions called upon their South Africa counterparts to support their demand for free political activity in their country. The trade union, together with the Solidarity Network, decided to block all entry points into Swaziland.

ZAMBIA

21 November 2000 – The UNHCR in Zambia said it was preparing for more refugees from neighbouring DRC. According to the agency, at least 10,000 refugees (including soldiers) were expected to cross into the country.

ZIMBABWE

6 November 2000 – The Commercial Farmers Union's (CFU) appeal against President Mugabe's decision to take their farms without any compensation, started in the country's Supreme Court.

7 November 2000 – The *Zimbabwe Daily News* reported that Denmark had threatened to cease its aid to Zimbabwe until there was political stability in the country. In a separate incident, it was also reported that Sweden had suspended its aid to Zimbabwe because of the current political crisis.

27 November 2000 – Low voter turnout was reported in the Marondera West constituency. According to the MDC, the ruling ZANU-PF's campaign of intimidation was the main cause of this poor turnout.

1 December 2000 – Zimbabwean doctors embarked on a strike against what they called 'government's failure to meet their demands for better and improved pay for overtime work'.

11 December 2000 – It was announced that President Mugabe had amended the electoral law in order to prevent opposition parties from legally challenging the results of the June elections. The amendment states that the election of all presiding members of parliament cannot be overturned, regardless of claims made by opposition parties.

NORTH AFRICA

ALGERIA

29 November 2000 – Algeria held a meeting with Spain to consolidate bilateral relations between the two countries. The Minister of Participation and Coordination of Reforms said that Algeria was interested in extending their cooperation beyond that of the oil and gas sectors.

EGYPT

4 November 2000 – The second round of elections began with an election run-off for 116 of the 134 seats being contested. An election re-run will be held if none of the candidates obtain at least 50% of the votes.

15 November 2000 – The ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) won 388 of the 454 seats in parliament which translates to 85% of the votes.

25 December 2000 – Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, met with Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, to discuss the current situation in the Middle East. The talks took place in Cairo.

MAURITANIA

26 November 2000 – Four members of the banned opposition party, Union of Democratic Forces (UFD-EN), who were imprisoned in early November, were released. The UFD-EN was banned in October after it held a series of protests calling for Mauritania's termination of diplomatic ties with Israel.

MOROCCO

1 November 2000 – The Moroccan Monarch, King Mohamed, resumed a ten-day campaign aimed at assessing funds to help fight poverty in the country. It is estimated that one third of Moroccans live below the poverty line.

10 December 2000 – The US assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs was in Morocco discussing the ongoing peace efforts in the Middle East.

TUNISIA

13 November 2000 – Tunisia's president, Ben Ali, and the chairman of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) held a meeting to discuss the cooperation between Tunisia and AFESD. Currently, AFESD has funded 35 projects in Tunisia amounting to US$1,1 billion.

13 December 2000 – US assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, Edward Walker, met with Tunisian government officials to discuss the Middle East peace process, and the ongoing violence in the region.

31 December 2000 – Palestine leader, Yasser Arafat, was in Tunisia for talks with the country's leader, President Zine Ben Ali. They discussed current peace initiatives in the Middle East.

WESTERN SAHARA

27 November 2000 – The European conference responsible for coordinating the committees supporting the Western Saharan cause, called for a referendum and the full implementation of the UN settlement plan. The conference urged other European countries to pressurise Spain to end its agreement with Morocco, which the conference saw as violating the rights of the Saharan people.

14 December 2000 – The Polisario Front handed over 201 Moroccan soldiers, who were imprisoned 25 years ago, to the ICRC.

WEST AFRICA

BURKINA FASO

4 December 2000 – The government of Burkina Faso decided to establish a body to monitor the flow of weapons within the country. This was a result of alleged reports that the country was smuggling weapons to rebel formations in Sierra Leone.

THE GAMBIA

21 December 2000 – The African Development Bank (ADB) issued US$3,80 million to Gambia. The funds will be used in an electrification programme for 46 towns and villages in the vicinity of Banjul.

GHANA

11 December 2000 – The National Electoral Commission announced a presidential run-off after the seven candidates failed to secure a clear victory in the country's general elections. The first round of polls showed the National Patriotic Party (NPP) had won half of the 200 parliamentary seats, while the ruling National Democratic Congress had obtained 91.

GUINEA-BISSAU

30 November 2000 – International organisations expressed their full support of the democratic government of Guinea-Bissau, following a recent failed attempt by General Ansumane Mane to declare himself the head of the armed forces. However, troops loyal to the current government forced him to flee from the country.

IVORY COAST

1 November 2000 – A Committee of Mediation for National Reconciliation – made up of 23 members from civil society, the army, media and religious bodies – was formed in the Ivory Coast. The committee is expected to come up with a framework for dialogue, following the recent post- election woes.

13 December 2000 – The National Electoral Commission (NEC) announced that the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) won 96 seats out of 225, while the former ruling Democratic Party (PDCI) won only 77 seats. The elections for 27 seats in the north could not be held due to clashes between members of the FPI and the PDCI.

15 December 2000 – Following allegations of the rape and torture of detainees, President Gbagbo called upon the interior minister to institute an investigation of the security forces. The announcement was made after a report that security agencies had abused detainees at the Police Training School earlier in December.

31 December 2000 – In his new year's address to the nation, president of the Ivory Coast, Laurent Gbagbo, called for reconciliation in the country, following a year of political turmoil in 2000.

NIGER

19 December 2000 – The French development agency granted Niger US$5,4 million in order to support the country's economic development and adjustment programmes.

NIGERIA

22 November 2000 – The government of Japan granted Nigeria US$11 million for electricity supplies to villages in the state of

Nassarawa. The federal government also pledged to provide funds to connect most rural areas to the national electricity power station.

22 December 2000 – President Obasanjo formerly established the board of the Niger-Delta Commission during the country's inauguration ceremony. The commission had been set up to implement the developmental plan for the Niger-Delta, which has remained one of the underdeveloped areas in the country.

SIERRA LEONE

1 November 2000 – It was reported that 500 Royal Marines had arrived in Freetown to provide extended support to the UN mission in the country. The marines will also train members of the Sierra Leone Army.

10 November 2000 – The RUF and the government of Sierra Leone met in Nigeria to try and resolve the country's ongoing civil war. The meeting, which was also attended by the UN and ECOWAS, was expected to address issues relating to disarmament and the establishment of a cease-fire agreement.

13 November 2000 – The government and RUF representatives who met in Abuja agreed to the cessation of all hostilities between them. The two parties agreed that UN peacekeepers should be allowed to deploy in all areas, including those held by rebels. It was also agreed that the implementation of this agreement should be reviewed 30 days after it came into effect.

24 November 2000 – The WFP reported that it had resumed its supply of food aid to 550 ex-fighters who were going through a demolibisation and disarmament programme.

30 November 2000 – World Vision International conducted a three week training course in peace-building and reconciliation in Sierra Leone. The training involved 80 ex-combatants and child soldiers from various factions, as well as pro-government militias from throughout the country.

30 November 2000 – The government of Japan released US$306,094 to the UN trust fund for Sierra Leone. The funds will be used to assist in the reintegration and rehabilitation programmes of former combatants, child soldiers and women who were affected by the country's civil strife.

11 December 2000 – MAMSIL reported that Johnny Paul Koroma, former military leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council in Sierra Leone, had handed in weapons and ammunition, including 47 rifles, 27 RPG bombs and several machine guns and military tents.

REUTERS

A United Nations soldier
in Sierra Leone

CENTRAL AFRICA

ANGOLA

27 December 2000 – Eugenio Manuvakola, leader of the breakaway faction, UNITA-Renovada, called on all conflicting parties to work together towards achieving peace and stability in the country.

CAMEROON

21 December 2000 – The African Development Bank (ADB) approved a loan of US$11,40 million to Cameroon. The funds will be used to improve one of the country's main road infrastructures.

DRC

8 November 2000 – At a summit of African leaders in Tripoli, Libya agreed to deploy a neutral African force to the DRC. The summit was attended by the presidents of Zimbabwe, Mali, Uganda and Rwanda, as well as officials from the DRC, Angola, South Africa and Namibia. The Libyan leader was mandated to oversee the implementation of the agreement.

22 November 2000 – The UNHCR announced that it had dispatched a team to Betou – located near the DRC border – to assist about 25,000 refugees.

27 November 2000 – A DRC crisis summit, chaired by South African president, Thabo Mbeki, and attended by other regional leaders, resumed in Mozambique. The aim of the summit was to put the Lusaka Agreement back on track.

30 November 2000 – The political committee, which is responsible for the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, urged the UN to boost its military presence in the country. The committee stated that the UN should take advantage of the renewed commitment by the parties to the conflict, to withdraw their forces. The agreement to pull back their forces was expected to be signed on 5 December in Zimbabwe.

8 December 2000 – The UN secretary general recommended to the Security Council that MONUC's mandate be extended to 15 June 2001. The mandate was meant to expire on 15 December 2000. It is expected that the extension will allow the UN to maintain and improve its observer presence within the country.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

17 November 2000 – The government approved a provisional new constitution for the country which will, among other things, enhance the powers of the executive by proposing that the president be made head of the state and government. The constitution will go through a process of a national debate, which will culminate in a referendum next year.

17 November 2000 – An agreement was reached between France and Congo, in which the former agreed to provide funds to establish an HIV/AIDS information and documentation centre, which will boost Congo's health programme.

22 November 2000 – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued an amount of US$14 million to be used in post-conflict reconstruction measures.

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

20 December 2000 – It was announced that the Sao Tome and Principe would receive a loan of US$1,2 million from the IMF under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility programme.

EAST AFRICA

BURUNDI

6 November 2000 – Six Tutsi political parties – ANADDE, AV-Intwari, INK-INZO, PIT, RADDES and PRP – chose their presidential candidate to lead in the transitional phase. The parties jointly decided on former Minister of Interior, Colonel Epitace Bayaganakandi.

24 November 2000 – The Burundi peace facilitator, Nelson Mandela, said he would give the rebels some time to review their stance regarding the ceasefire agreement. The announcement was made after Mandela met with representatives of the CNDD-FDD and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL.

27 November 2000 – Nelson Mandela formerly launched the Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC), which will be mandated to monitor the implementation of the 28 August peace agreement. The committee – made up of 29 members, who include donor countries, the OAU, the UN and 19 signatories to the peace agreement – will be chaired by UN special representative of the UN secretary-general to the Great Lakes, Berhanu Dinka.

12 December 2000 – Belgium's secretary of state for development cooperation, Eddy Boutmans, said that his country would provide one billion Belgian francs in support of the peace initiatives in Burundi. The announcement was made at a meeting of donor countries, which gathered to find ways of supporting the ongoing peace initiatives.

COMOROS

1 December 2000 – Following the dissolution of the previous cabinet, Ahmed Amadi (former director in the president's office) was appointed as the new prime minister. Amadi is expected to give new direction to the ongoing negotiations within the Comoros archipelago.

DJIBOUTI

21 November 2000 – A three-day conference organised to discuss the issue of landmines in the Horn of Africa, concluded that a Regional Landmine and Research Training Centre should be established in Djibouti. The centre will promote the Ottawa Ban Treaty on the use and elimination of landmines, and will also provide assistance to landmine victims in the region.

22 November 2000 – The UNHCR office in Djibouti announced that a number of Somali refugees, who were residing in Obock in northern Djibouti, were returned to their homes in Mogadishu, as well as other areas in the south.

ERITREA

28 December 2000 – The government of Japan pledged US$1,36 million as an emergency grant to assist Eritreans who suffered during the country's border war with Ethiopia.

KENYA

6 November 2000 – The WFP stated that it had received 21,500 tones of maize for emergency relief measures in drought affected areas in the country. The maize will be distributed to 3,9 million people, providing a two month ration. According to the WFP, this was the first batch of food aid from the 40,000 tones pledged by the US. The rest of the supplies were expected to arrive during the next few weeks.

24 November 2000 – The UNHCR announced that it had provided US$80,000 for vehicle maintenance, fuel and stipends for the Kenyan police force guarding the Daadab refugee camp. The move was prompted by reports that Somali refugees were

falling prey to violent attacks and rape because of inadequate security in and around the camp.

RWANDA

10 November 2000 – Following a meeting with government officials, international donors agreed to cancel half of the debt that Rwanda owed. Estimates showed that Rwanda's external debt stood at US$1,226 million in 1998. This meant that debt servicing alone amounted to 16.9% of the country's exports.

23 November 2000 – The government of Denmark cemented its cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), when it announced that it would hand over a former Rwandan army official, Innocent Sagahatu, to stand trial in Arusha. Sagahatu is reportedly facing 12 charges for his involvement in the 1994 genocide. He is also facing charges for the killing of ten peacekeepers from Belgium.

24 November 2000 – In his report to the Security Council, the president of the ICTR stated that there were 35 suspects awaiting trial in Arusha. He also stated that the court was expecting to make five new arrests before the end of the year.

27 November 2000 – Germany pledged to release an amount of US$558,000 in humanitarian assistance to drought affected areas in Rwanda.

1 December 2000 – The Security Council passed a resolution to increase the ICTR – a new pool of 27 additional judges will be created to assist the tribunal with its workload. In terms of the resolution, the 27 judges will be called upon to assist the tribunal as and when a need arises.

21 December 2000 – It was reported that the Rwandan army destroyed the Interahamwe militias' base, which was situated in the Virunga Park forests, located near the common border with Uganda and the DRC.

27 December 2000 – The World Bank and the IMF approved a debt reduction plan for Rwanda, which will fall under the HIPC programme. In terms of this debt relief package, the World Bank stated that Rwanda would save an estimated US$810 million in debt servicing.

SOMALIA

2 December 2000 – A delegation of Qatari officials – consisting of members from the Qatari ministries of planning, foreign and defence – arrived in Somalia to assess the needs of Somali's new government.

11 December 2000 – A training seminar for about 99 members of the Somali parliament was held under the aegis of the United Nations Development Programme's Capacity Building Initiative. The training formed part of the UNDP's initiative to help new government officials better understand issues related to governance.

19 December 2000 – In his report to the Security Council, Mr Kofi Annan expressed his willingness to prepare a proposal for a UN peace-building mission for Somalia, however, such a mission would only resume once there were enough security guarantees in Mogadishu.

SUDAN

5 December 2000 – An OAU observer delegation arrived in Sudan to oversee the country's general elections.

30 December 2000 – The chairman of the General Electoral Commission (GEC) announced that President Bashir had won the country's presidential elections with 86.5% of the votes. The OAU observer group commended the GEC for the manner in which the elections were conducted.

TANZANIA

13 November 2000 – The international community welcomed the new Zanzibar president's decision to release 18 members of the opposition Civic United Front (CUF), who were imprisoned for three years on charges of treason.

UGANDA

15 November 2000 – President Museveni met with the UN secretary-general's special envoy to the Great Lakes, Berhanu Dinka to discuss the situation in Burundi, including the implementation of the peace agreement in that country.

30 November 2000 – The Ugandan Army rescued 50 children – all between the ages of two and 17 – who were reportedly kidnapped by the Allied Democratic Forces near the Rwenzori Mountains. According to reports, they had already been placed under a re-orientation programme.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

BOTSWANA

29 November 2000 – De Beers Consolidated Mines finalised its plans to resume its US$45 million diamond mining initiative in Botswana. It is estimated that this venture will create 180 jobs and put Botswana among the world's largest producers of diamonds, with an annual output of more than 25 million carats.

MALAWI

2 November 2000 – President Muluzi sacked the entire Malawi cabinet after he received information from the Anti-Corruption Bureau that his ministers were involved in corruption.

1 December 2000 – The Malawi Electoral Commission released the results of the November local government elections: the ruling United Democratic Front won 610 out of 860 contested seats, while the opposition Alliance for Democracy won 120 seats.

7 December 2000 – The British government pledged to issue US$41 million to Malawi. This move forms part of the British government's debt relief programme for 41 heavily indebted countries.

22 December 2000 – Malawi will further benefit from debt relief following an announcement that the IMF and World Bank will relieve about US$643 million worth of debt – this move forms part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

SOUTH AFRICA

27 November 2000 – The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town led a march of about 2,000 men who were protesting against increasing cases of abuse against women. The event organisers stated that on average, three women were raped in South Africa every three minutes.

ZAMBIA

24 November 2000 – It was announced that the World Bank and other donors would grant Zambia US$40 million in December to offset the country's oil payments. The request came from the Zambian government, after it realised that it had spent US$60 million more on oil imports.

11 December 2000 – The EU pledged to provide Zambia with US$5,26 million to assist with the country's general elections in 2001.

ZIMBABWE

22 November 2000 – Zimbabwe's economy was boosted when tobacco sales amounted to US$169,2 a kilogram – although the price was lower than that of the previous year. Volumes increased by 25%, with the gross revenue totalling US$400 million.

24 November 2000 – The Supreme Court ordered police to evict about 100 invaders who had occupied 1,600 farms in Zimbabwe. This decision reversed an earlier decision of the lower court.

27 November 2000 – The Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) stated that its support of the government's land reform programme was dependent on the latter upholding the rule of law in the country. The CZI indicated that it was only willing to assist the government to obtain international support for its programme, if the government was willing to work within an accepted legal framework.

29 November 2000 – The Zimbabwean High Court set aside 9 January 2001 to 11 May 2001 as the dates when the court would hear petitions from the opposition MDC, which has challenged the results of the parliamentary elections in 38 constituencies. The MDC filed a complaint with the High Court, stating that there were election irregularities in 38 constituencies and that it would therefore not accept the election results.